あまつき 9

高山しのぶ
SHINOBU TAKAYAMA

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エロL
一迅社

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A5判

楽屋裏	①-②	魔神ぐり子
ストレンジ・プラス	①-⑧	美川べるの
最遊記RELOAD	①-⑨	峰倉かずや
最遊記	全9巻	峰倉かずや
最遊記外伝	①-③	峰倉かずや

B6判

オリンポス	①	あき
07-GHOST	①-⑦	雨宮ゆき乃 原作・高河ゆん
愛にトシの差なんて	全1巻	五十嵐 嵐
コーセルテルの竜術士物語	①-⑦	石動あゆま
彩の神	①	上田 信舟
DAWN～冷たい手	全6巻	上田 信舟
破天荒遊戯	①-⑪	遠藤 海成
Weiß Side B	①-⑤	大鋒 ショウコ 原作・宇安武人
Landreaall	①-⑬	おがきちか
斬バラ！	①	片桐いくみ
嵐雪記	①-⑨	片山 愁
ねじまきの庭	①	榧世 シキ
少年羽狩人	①-②	喜久田ゆい
#000000-ultra black-	①-②	如月 芳規
ボクラノキセキ	①	久米田夏緒
橙星	①-②	群 青
LOVELESS	①-⑧	高河 ゆん
アニメ店長	①-③	島本 和彦
ブラックダストポーション	①	芹川 豆
ハイガクラ	①	高山しのぶ
あまつき	①-⑨	高山しのぶ
MR.MORNING	全2巻	高山しのぶ
共闘せよ！私立蘭高校図書委員会	①-③	D・キッサン
鉄壱智	①-⑤	なるしまゆり
バレスタnever give up！	全1巻	鳥条 こうくみ 原作・藤村ゴージ
DOLLS	①-⑥	naked ape
噂屋	①-③	唐居 ナツメ 原作・保坂歩
獏～BAKU～	全4巻	びっけ
TRAMP	①	藤原 ゆう
東海道HISAME―扉炎―	①-②	松永 空也
カーニヴァル	①-②	御巫 桃也
祈り姫は空に微笑う	①	水谷 笠 珠緒
魔法騎士マジックスター学院★★★	全5巻	南澤 久佳
魔法騎士マジック★スター学院	全5巻	南澤 久佳
LUWON	全5巻	南澤 久佳
拝み屋横丁顛末記	①-⑪	宮本 福助
di[e]ce―ダイス―	①-③	山本 佳 原作・味木音緒
+C sword and cornett	①	遊行寺たま
収拾体質	①-②	よねやまゼっこ
不機嫌な名探偵division-Ø	①-③	渡辺 瑞樹

COMMENT

高山しのぶ

SHINOBU TAKAYAMA

鴇がやっとこでばれたと思ったら
陰陽寮編に突入です。
ごく一部の方、お待たせしました。
次巻でついに大台突入。
がんばります。

あまつき
9

Amatsuki 9

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IT'S THE COUNTRY'S BIGGEST HISTORICAL THEME PARK, AND IT'S CONNECTED TO SENSAI.
TRAVELLING EXHIBIT EDO IN THE MID-19TH CENTURY
AN EDO-THEMED TRAVELLING EXHIBIT?
IT'S A MIX OF CG AND REAL, SO THEY'RE ADVERTISING IT AS "VIRTUAL REALITY YOU CAN FEEL"
OH MY, THIS IS A HIGH-TECH AND TOTAL IMMERSION!
IT'S SPONSORED BY THE MINISTRY OF EDUCATION, RECREATION AND CULTURE.
IT'S BASED ON THE "EDO TOKYO MUSEUM" IN UENO.
NOTE: THIS IS A REAL MUSEUM! NO VIRTUAL REALITY, THOUGH.
THE EDO PERIOD
IS TO ENTER..
SO, YOUR NEXT ASSIGN-MENT

Chapter 49
This way or that way?

UH, KINDA?
THERE'S THESE GOGGLES THAT THEY DISTRIBUTE TO ALL OF THE VISITORS.
"FLI"
AH, THAT'S A VERY NEAT DISPLAY, ISN'T IT?
THEY WORK IN CONJUCTION WITH THE SURROUNDING ENVIRONMENT TO PRODUCE A SEAMLESS VISUAL IMAGE.
OOH
YE.UH, MY GOGGLES WORK THE SAME WAY.
SEES
.. OKAY, READ OVER THOSE DOCUMENTS AND TELL ME IF YOU NOTICE ANYTHING WEIRD.
OH!
SO CUTE~
GLARE
THEY'RE TRADEMARKED! MY EYES ARE BAD, SO THEY'RE PROTECTIVE!
WHAT ARE YOU DOING WITH SOMETHING LIKE THAT?

AH... BUT THIS IS STRANGE
WELL, YES...
?
WHY? 'CAUSE THEY MIX REALITY AND VIRTUAL REALITY?
POLYMER SCREENS THERE ARE SEVERAL METHOD TO FOOL THE EYES WITH AN ALMOST-REAL IMAGE
WE HAVE STEREOSCOPIC TELEVISIONS, ULTRA-THIN SCREENS,
IN CURRENT 3D TECHNOLOGY
OH, I GET IT YOU NEED SPECIAL EQUIPMENT TO SEE IT
BUT THINGS LIKE THAT ARE SO FRAGILE AND EXPENSIVE THAT THE IDEA OF PUTTING SOMETHING LIKE THAT IN THE HANDS OF EVERY VISITOR WHO WALKS THROUGH THE DOOR IS

I DOUBT THEIR REAL INTENTION
IS TO ENTRUST THEIR TECHNOLOGY TO VISITORS
THAT'S
GASP
GOGGLES WRAP AROUND THE HEAD— AND THEY NEEDED SOMETHING THAT WOULD BE IN CONTACT WITH THE HEAD
NOW DO YOU UNDERSTAND WHY SENSAI IS SO DEEPLY INVOLVED?
THEY'RE A BRAIN-COMPUTER INTERFACE
THE KEY TO THE DEVELOPMENT OF SENSAI'S PRODUCTS IS THE LEVEL OF PRECISION AT THE POINT WHERE THE COMPUTER MEETS THE BRAIN. THE "BRAIN-COMPUTER INTERFACE."
THERE'S NO PHYSICAL ELECTRODE CONNECTED TO THE BRAIN
!?

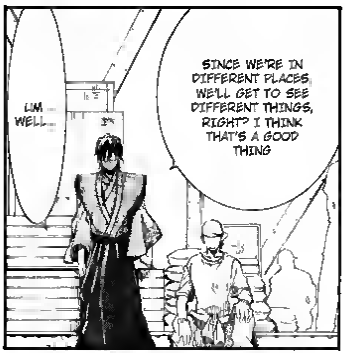
WHISPER
CHATTER
CARRY THAT OVER HERE!
TAMURA!
CHATTER
BANG BANG
PLOT 23 ISN'T READY YET!
WHISPER
TAP TAP
CHATTER
CHATTER
BANG
BANG
CHATTER
HASHITA-SAN~!
I'M AN OLD FART
I'M WAY TO OLD TO GET USED TO PHYSICAL LABOR!
WHEEZE
WHEEZE
...DAMN IT, WHY ME?
MAY I OFFER THEE A CUP OF TEA?
AH, THOU ART WORKING HARD, MY LORD!

HEY! HOW COME THE MASTER IS SWEATING WHILE THE YOUNG BRAT IS DRESSED UP AND POURING TEA?
HAHA-HAHA ♥
HU ♥ HM
I GET TO BE A SAMURAI LORD~ ♥
DOES IT SUIT ME?

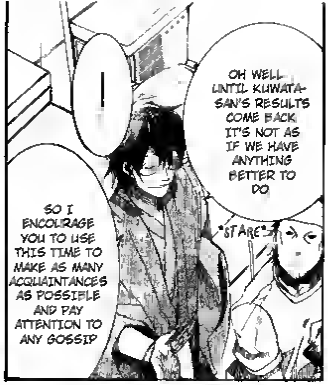
DAMN IT, WHAT KIND OF EDO PERIOD GAME IS THIS?
MY BONES FEEL LIKE THEY'RE AT A REAL WORLD CONSTRUCTION SITE, YOU KNOW?

WELL, YOU'RE ON THE CONSTRUCTION STAFF, AND I'M IN GUEST SERVICES
THOSE ARE THE ASSIGNMENTS THAT WE WERE HANDED, SO THERE'S NOTHING WE CAN DO ABOUT IT
HMPH!
THAT'S DISCRIMINATION!
BECAUSE I'M A DIRTY OLD MAN, RIGHT?

LIM HE'S ON THE ARTS AND CRAFTS STAFF, RIGHT?
ME
UWAAAAH~
MAYBE WAKASA-SAN IS THE REAL WINNER HERE
MOST LIKELY
DON'T SAY THAT~


LIM WELL...
SINCE WE'RE IN DIFFERENT PLACES, WE'LL GET TO SEE DIFFERENT THINGS, RIGHT? I THINK THAT'S A GOOD THING

YOU NEVER KNOW WHEN IT MIGHT COME IN HANDY
AH!
TURN
HASHITA-SAN?

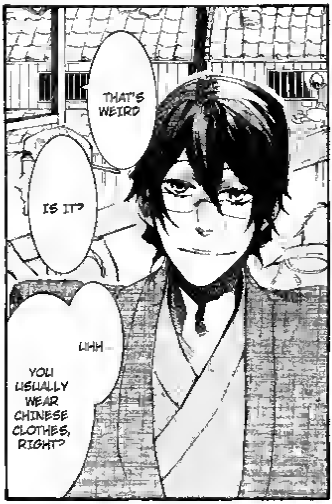

OH WELL. UNTIL KUWATA-SAN'S RESULTS COME BACK. IT'S NOT AS IF WE HAVE ANYTHING BETTER TO DO
!
SO I ENCOURAGE YOU TO USE THIS TIME TO MAKE AS MANY ACQUAINTANCES AS POSSIBLE AND PAY ATTENTION TO ANY GOSSIP
STARE

SO DON'T MOVE
I'LL PUT ALL OF MY ENERGY INTO STANDING AROUND WITH A CAN OF COFFEE AND LISTENING FOR GOSSIP
AH?
?
SHUT UP... I GET IT
WHAT IS IT?
HAVE YOU HEARD SOMETHING?

WAAH! THAT'S AMAZING, HASHITA-SAN!
YOU CAN EVEN DO THINGS LIKE THIS!
sparkle
WELL, YEAH

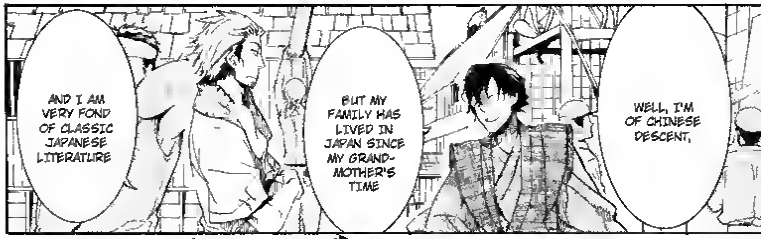
I PRACTICE EVERY DAY FOR LILY!!
UWAAH, THAT'S KIND OF GROSS

PULL
THERE YOU GO
THAT GOES BETTER WITH YOUR OUTFIT


THAT'S WEIRD
IS IT?
UHH
YOU USUALLY WEAR CHINESE CLOTHES, RIGHT?

I REALLY LOVE TO WEAR JAPANESE CLOTHING LIKE THIS~~~
FUFU BUT THIS IS NICE THANK YOU VERY MUCH

—UH, OKAY
I'VE ALWAYS WANTED TO WEAR IT!


AND I AM VERY FOND OF CLASSIC JAPANESE LITERATURE
BUT MY FAMILY HAS LIVED IN JAPAN SINCE MY GRAND-MOTHER'S TIME
WELL, I'M OF CHINESE DESCENT,

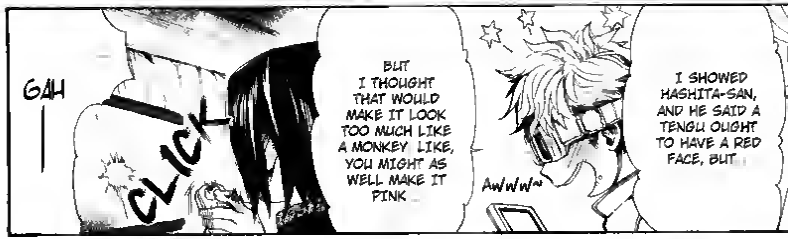
THAT'S HOW IT IS
EVEN THOUGH THAT SORT OF CLOTHING MIGHT BE A LITTLE STRANGE, PERHAPS
BUT MY SISTER PREFERS CHINESE CLOTHING,

HM
PH
OPEN
OH!
WEL-COME BACK!
HERE IT'S A SOUVE-NIER
DROP
SLAM
UH THANKS
WHAT HAPPEN-ED?
SO, DID YOU FINISH WHAT YOU WERE DOING?
THANKFULLY, THE CLIENT WILL PAY US EXTRA FOR OUR TROUBLES
RATTLE...
NOTHING, IT'S JUST THAT WE'RE PUTTING EVERYTHING INTO LOOKING FOR SENSAI AND I HAD TO DO A LITTLE NAGGING
SQUEEZE
I WAS KINDA LONELY ALL BY MYSELF IN THIS FANCY LIMO, SO I HACKED INTO SENSAI!
WAH! ♥ PEACH BUNS!
OF COURSE- ♥ I FINISHED WHILE YOU WERE OFF NAGGING, SHIRAAI-SAN

I CAN'T BELIEVE I NEVER NOTICED BEFORE
OH?
IT'S A FULL GPS TRACKING PROGRAM! LOOK, SHIRAAI-SAN, MARVEL AT MY PROWESS~!
STEAM
WOW, WAS IT ANY GOOD?
START THE CAR, PLEASE.
YES, MA'AM!
WAH!
I DIDN'T THINK YOU'D ACTUALLY DO IT!
SLAM
GO AHEAD, WAKASA-SAMA EAT THE WHOLE BAG, OH GREAT ONE
SEE
pop!
Aonibi Hasita
HERE ARE HASHITA-SAN AND AONIBI-SAN.
OH,
LOOKS LIKE THEY'RE HEADED BACK TO THE OFFICE
OKAY!
BUT... THIS IS ALL TOP SECRET STUFF THAT CAN'T GO BEYOND THIS CAR
CARE TO TELL ME ABOUT YOUR GREAT VICTORY IN HACKING?
VROOOM
BEEP

I'M WORRIED THEY'VE BEEN TRACKING US FROM THE START
SINCE THERE'S NO ACTIVITY IN HASHITA-SAN'S NEIGHBORHOOD, I GUESS HE'S NOT MOVING
WOULD YOU LIKE ANOTHER HEATING PAD?
UGH.. UGH.. UGH..
WITH THIS, THEY CAN USE GPS TO TRACK PEOPLE EVEN AT A PRIVATE ADDRESS
ARE WE BUSTED?
NO— IT SEEMS LIKE THEY TRACK ALL OF THE EMPLOYEES
IF THEY GET CAUGHT ONCE, IT'S OVER
ALL WORKERS GET A THOROUGH INVESTIGATION OF THEIR WORK HISTORY THROUGH A BACKGROUND CHECK
YEAH, TOTALLY
WE'LL FIND SOME WAY TO INFILTRATE THE TOP. WE HAVE TO BE PATIENT.
BUT THERE ARE ABOUT A HUNDRED WORKERS...
SOUNDS LIKE A LOT OF WORK
UM
AH HA HA
HOW'S YOUR OTHER WORK GOING?
OH?
OH, YEAH, AND BY THE WAY, I HAVEN'T GOTTEN A RESPONSE YET FROM THE DATA I EXCHANGED ONLINE

...WHAT?
I DESIGNED IT MYSELF! IT'S COMPANY MASCOT, KACCHAN THE KARASU TENGU~♥
ISN'T IT LOVELY?
GONG
JUST LEAVE THE SEARCH TO ME !!


GAH
CLICK
BUT I THOUGHT THAT WOULD MAKE IT LOOK TOO MUCH LIKE A MONKEY LIKE, YOU MIGHT AS WELL MAKE IT PINK...
AWWW~
I SHOWED HASHITA-SAN, AND HE SAID A TENGU OUGHT TO HAVE A RED FACE, BUT...

SNIFFLE
I DON'T CARE
BUT I PROGRAMMED IT IN 3D FOR SYNCHRONIZED SPEECH AND MOVEMENT. ...
I DON'T CARE.

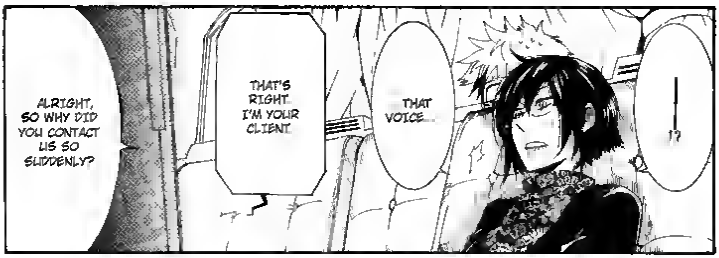
WELL, THEN
WHERE TO NEXT?
IF WE WANT HONEY, WE'LL HAVE TO HEAD INTO THE HORNET'S NEST, HMM?
SQUEAK
BUT THE NEST IS SWARMING WITH SOLDIER BEES, SO WE CAN'T APPROACH DIRECTLY
BUT WE'VE GOT TO DIVE RIGHT IN OR WE'RE GOING TO GET STING
WE'VE GOT ONE CARD IN OUR HAND, AND THAT'S KUWATA SHOU. THAT'S DISHEARTENING
BEFORE WE JUMP IN, MAYBE WE SHOULD...
#ISS
WELCOME HONORED GUESTS ...
CLICK
#ISS
#ISSSS
.. SEEMS LIKE THERE'S A TRAFFIC JAM ..

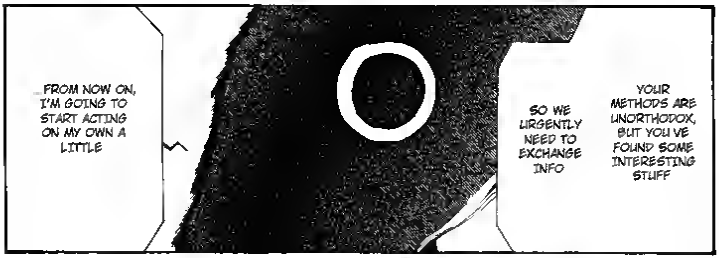
!!!
YOUR TRAVEL PLANS WILL BE SLIGHTLY DELAYED ...
WHAT !! THERE'S A STRONG ELECTRO-MAGNETIC FIELD EMANATING FROM THE CARS AHEAD OF AND BEHIND US! IT'S A MONITOR HIJACK!

SHOCK
WAKASA-KUN!?
WHAT THE HELL JUST HAPPENED!?
WHAT!? CAN THIS ALL BE FROM SENSAI!? EVERYTHING IS CAMOFLAUGED!
MAYBE SOMEONE YOU KNOW IS DOING THIS, SHIRAAI-SAN!?
FOR THEM TO PERSONALLY TRACK US DOWN...
WHAT!?

static
WHO... WHO'S DOING THIS...
SORRY ABOUT THAT. I WANTED TO GET IN TOUCH WITH YOU SO I TRACKED YOUR DISPOSABLE CELL PHONES.
I'M JOINING UP WITH YOU.
SFX: "POP"
IT'S ME!
go
ng
SFX: "SLAM"
SORRY ABOUT THAT...
GLINT
DID I SCARE YOU?

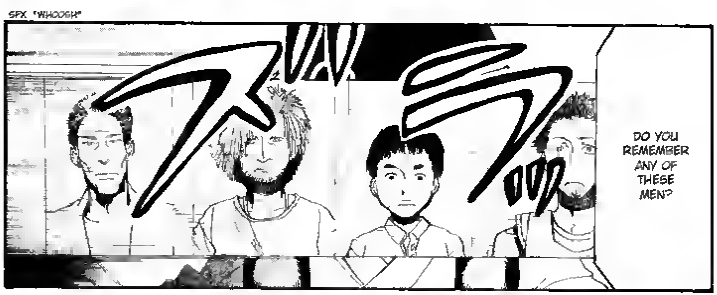
Kacchan came to life...!!
what the hell !!?
it's a computer screen! and you programmed it!!!
?
ARE YOU TWO BUSY?
I WANTED TO TALK.


!?
THAT VOICE...
THAT'S RIGHT. I'M YOUR CLIENT.
ALRIGHT, SO WHY DID YOU CONTACT US SO SUDDENLY?


YOUR METHODS ARE UNORTHODOX, BUT YOU'VE FOUND SOME INTERESTING STUFF
SO WE URGENTLY NEED TO EXCHANGE INFO
FROM NOW ON, I'M GOING TO START ACTING ON MY OWN A LITTLE

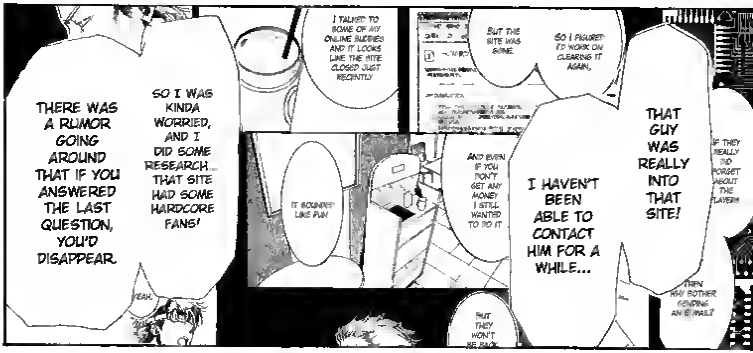
!?

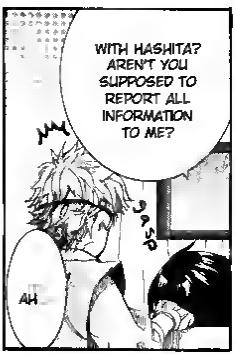
HEY, DO YOU GUYS REMEMBER THAT QUIZ SITE THAT WAS POPULAR A WHILE AGO?
HERE, TAKE A LOOK
QUIZ SITE?
HEY, I'M PRETTY CUTE IN THIS FORM.
?
...THIS ISN'T SOMETHING A NOVICE CAN DO, THOUGH.
HAHA, I KNOW I WON'T DO ANYTHING STUPID.


SFX: "WHOOSH"
DO YOU REMEMBER ANY OF THESE MEN?

HUH?!
GAAH
!!!
gasp
?
Let's go to bed.

REMEMBER?
ANOTHER CASE?
BUT I'VE BEEN HEARING SOME WEIRD STUFF ABOUT ANOTHER CASE.
DID THEY ALL GO TO THAT WEIRD QUIZ SITE!?
THAT QUIZ SITE I SHOWED YOU.
NOBODY KNEW WHERE IT CAME FROM... NOBODY KNEW WHY IT WAS THERE...THERE WERE JUST THOSE VAGUE QUESTIONS...
THAT TRAVEL AGENCY SITE WITH THE REALLY WEIRD QUESTION!
SEEEEEEEEE


I TALKED TO SOME OF MY ONLINE BUDDIES AND IT LOOKS LIKE THE SITE CLOSED JUST RECENTLY
BUT THE SITE WAS SCARE.
SO I FIGURED I'D WORK ON CLEARING IT AGAIN,
THERE WAS A RUMOR GOING AROUND THAT IF YOU ANSWERED THE LAST QUESTION, YOU'D DISAPPEAR.
SO I WAS KINDA WORRIED, AND I DID SOME RESEARCH... THAT SITE HAD SOME HARDCORE FANS!
IT SOUNDS LIKE FUN
AND EVEN IF YOU DON'T GET ANY MONEY I STILL WANTED TO TRY IT
I HAVEN'T BEEN ABLE TO CONTACT HIM FOR A WHILE...
THAT GUY WAS REALLY INTO THAT SITE!
IF THEY REALLY DO FORGET ABOUT THE PLAYERS
THEN WHY BOTHER SENDING AN E-MAIL?
BUT THEY WON'T BE BACK
YEAH



SPIC GRRRRRR

SN
AP
HUH?
WELL, IT'S NOT UN-RELATED
HERE'S A RECORDING OF THE SITE TAKEN BY ONE OF THE USERS
HE WANTED TO SAVE A COPY OF THE QUESTION, BUT THE SITE WAS COPY PROTECTED. SO HE TOOK A VIDEO
THIS PART IS IMPORTANT SO WATCH CLOSELY.

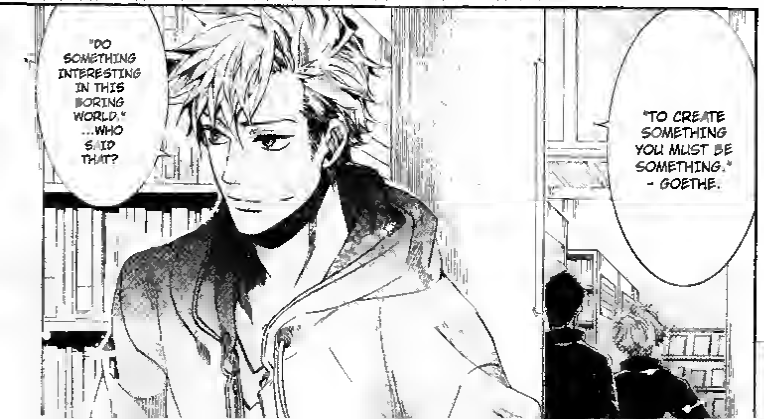
IS THAT...
SENSAI'S SYMBOL?
THAT SYMBOL IS INGRAINED INTO YOUR BRAIN
AND BY THE TIME YOU ANSWER TEN QUES-TIONS,
YOU FLASH A "SUBLIMINAL" MESSAGE FOR A FRACTION OF A SECOND, FIVE FRAMES OR SO...AND THAT'S THE IMAGE THAT APPEARED ON THE SITE.
IT'S A CLASSIC TECH-NIQUE.
SEEMS LIKELY, DOESN'T IT?
SO THEY SET UP A SITE THAT WAS "INTERESTING" TO HINT THAT SENSAI WAS BEHIND THE SITE INVOLVED WITH THE DISAPPEARANCES?
BUT THIS SMELLS LIKE SOMETHING BIG.
I THOUGHT THEY WERE JUST OFFERING A CHANCE TO WIN SOME POCKET MONEY...
I SUPPOSE WE CAN'T JUST HAND IT OVER TO THE POLICE?
SO, DO YOU THINK YOU COULD USE ONE MORE INVESTIGATOR TO HUNT FOR THE TRUTH?

I CAN'T STAND BEING BORED...
AND THIS SOUNDS LIKE FUN, SO. I WANT IN ON THE ACTION
HAHA, FUNNY. NOW THAT WE'VE COME THIS FAR, I'M NOT ABOUT TO LET THE COPS HAVE IT
THEY DON'T HAVE THE INFO OR THE MOTIVATION

KEEP INVESTIGATING UNTIL YOU FIND SOMETHING IN THEIR PROFILES AND WE'LL GET TOGETHER I'LL LOOK INTO SOME THINGS, TOO
Yeah Yeah
YEAH
I'LL SEND THE LIST OF PEOPLE WHO DISAPPEARED TO YOUR MAIL ADDRESS
...SO, SHALL WE CONTINUE TO CARRY OUT OUR ASSIGN-MENT?
chatter
chatter
BUT KUWATA IS ALSO LISTED HERE AS A PERSON OF INTEREST
UNDER-STOOD
rip
static
WHAT? HEY, WAI
SFX: *FL
SHIT
click
I'LL TALK TO YOU LATER

WHOA IT'S LIKE A CITY IN HERE ISN'T IT?
WHO KNEW THE LIBRARY WAS LIKE THIS?
HEY, KON?
I DID WHAT YOU SAID, AND NOW I'M PULLING AWAY FROM THAT CAR IN THE TRAFFIC JAM
THANKS! I OWE YOU ONE
BUT I DUNNO IF THAT'S WHAT YOU WANTED
IS THERE ANYTHING ELSE YOU WANT?
THAT'S IT!
OKAY, SEE YOU LATER
BEEP

NOTE: THE QUOTE IS FROM THE DEATH POEM BY TAKASUGI SHINSAKU, A FAMOUS SAMURAI WHO DIED IN THE 1860S



YOSHIZAKI, RIKUGOU, COME ON!
FROWN
HOW LONG ARE YOU GUYS GONNA SPEND IN THE LIBRARY?
HEY IS THAT MANGA? IT'S MANGA!!
WAH IT SURE IS EMPTY IN HERE HEY, WHAT'S THAT?
NO WE'RE HERE FOR A REASON
WHAT?
LOOK AT THIS. ISN'T IT WEIRD?
IT'S LIKE A SUPER-SIZE COMPUTER~!
ALRIGHT, RIKUGOU, GET TO WORK.
OKAY~
CAN WE USE THIS ONE?
AH, NO GOOD, YOU CAN'T SURF THE NET..
SO YOU DON'T TRY TO AT PORN SITES, I GUESS.
a-ha-ha-ha-ha

HE FELL ASLEEP WHILE HE WAS STUDYING...?
HEY, RIKUGOU, WAKE UP...
HEY, LOOK! IT'S THAT TOKI KID

DAZED
GOOD MORNING
OOO!
PLEASE WAKE UP, RIKUGOU-SAMAAA!

Hana-Awase
Amatsuki fan
Raws
Translator
Cleaners
Typesetters
Quality Checker
あまつき

ONCE, ZHUANGZI DREAMED HE WAS A BUTTERFLY,
A HAPPY BUTTERFLY, FLITTING ABOUT WITHOUT A
CARE IN THE WORLD.
CHAPTER 50
WINGS GIVEN IN A DREAM
HE DID NOT KNOW HE WAS ZHUANGZI.
SUDDENLY, HE WOKE UP, AND THERE HE WAS,
SOLIDLY AND UNMISTAKEABLY ZHUANGZI.
BUT ZHUANGZI DIDN'T KNOW IF HE WAS A MAN DREAMING OF
BEING A BUTTERFLY, OR A BUTTERFLY DREAMING OF BEING A MAN.

CHAPTER 50 WINGS GIVEN IN A DREAM

tumble
tumble

HELLO THERE
Um
Ah
Uh
What ?
OH, ME?
I AM CALLED GINSHU
laugh
bow
AND ...
pant
WHO ARE YOU?

YOU CAN RELAX.
MY DREAM ...
IS END-ING.
REMEM-BER ...
THIS IS NOT ME.
AS FOR YOU ...
WHAT IS YOUR REAL NAME?
OH, RI-GHT.
I'M ...
UM
I'M —
THESE ARE ALL...
RIKU-GOU
TOKI
DOKI
GINSHU-SAN'S MEMO-RIES.

NO. THEY ARE NOT JUST MEMO-RIES
THEY WERE REAL
THEY ARE REAL.
Ah!
Oh no!
Ah!
Wah!
Wah!
AHH!!
I'M SO SORRY!!
I'M SORRY I COULDN'T SHOW YOU SOMETHING MORE CHEERFUL!
MY MEMORIES ARE SO ...
Thor's
NOT AT ALL!
NO
Thor's
SOb SOB
...
OH
I UNDER-STAND

... LONG AGO, I FORGOT HOW TO CRY...
THESE ARE MY TEARS.
Am I sad?
THAT'S HOW I ENDED UP.
THAT'S RIGHT ...
Am I in pain?

AND BONTEN REVIVED ME.
BUT SHINSHU'S WISH CALLED OUT TO HEAVEN.
AS A RESULT
BONTEN LOST HIS FOSTER FATHER'S BODY WHEN I POSSESSED
AND SHINSHU LOST HER SPECIAL POWER TO HEAVEN
NOW THE TWO OF THEM ARE FIRMLY BOUND BY HEAVEN'S NET.

I don't know why, but ...

I just started crying.

AS YOU SAW, I HAVE ALREADY DIED ONCE BEFORE.

Hm... maybe something tangible would be easier to understand.
fumble fumble
Ahaha.
Well, it is a bit complicated.
cry
cry
sniff..
I ... don't really get this at all.
I'll explain using my handmade Kashiwa-mochi ♡
POP!
Here we go!!
Don't think about it too hard. We're in a dream, after all!
fu fu
and why?
when did you put them there?
How did you get those?
SFX: shake-shake
I THOUGHT THIS WAS MY SOUL'S DYING DREAM ...
that's right
BUT RIKUGOU-SAN, I DON'T KNOW WHY YOU'RE HERE IN MY DREAM.
A DREAM ...?
Really?

Note: Kashiwamochi are rice cakes (mochi) filled with bean paste and wrapped in oak leaves. You don't eat the leaf! Kashiwamochi are a symbolic food for Children's Day because oak trees (like yamamba) don't lose their old leaves until the new leaves come out, so people say it represents a parents nurturing the next generation. The symbolism in this manga is so thick you could cut it with a knife~

What happens here doesn't mean anything!
Well, whatever! Dreams are fleeting, meaningless things anyway
A LUCID DREAM
That's what you call a dream where your mind is still conscious.
Is that what Kuroi-kun thinks about dreams?

THIS *KUSAMOCHI-FLAVORED ONE HERE IS THE GIANT SNAKE, BYAKUROKU.
OKAY? HERE WE GO. THE LEAF IS THE "BODY" AND THE MOCHI IS THE "SOUL."
Note: Kusamochi are given nice colors usually flavored with mugwort, an herb with a slightly bitter taste. But the most traditional kusamochi are made with a plant called "hahakogusa" which literally means "mother and child plant."
AND HE PLACED MY SOUL IN BYAKUROKU'S BODY, WHICH APPEARED TO BE DEAD AS WELL.
I WAS ALL MESSED UP LIKE THIS, SEE, BUT BONTEN TOOK MY SOUL OUT OF MY RUINED BODY.
SO, I CONTINUED TO LIVE IN THIS FORM.
poke
PERHAPS BYAKUROKU'S SOUL DISAPPEARED AFTER IT WAS SEPARATED FROM HIS BODY?
I REALLY DON'T KNOW.
SINCE THAT WAS A PROBLEM, TEITEN DECIDED TO TEACH US A LESSON
TO MAKE SURE MOCHI DOESN'T GET DIRTY, IT'S WRAPPED UP IN A LITTLE CLOTH. SHINSHU TRIED TO THROW AWAY THIS CLOTH

AND THE ONE TO ADMINISTER THAT LESSON WAS BONTEN.
...UP UNTIL THAT POINT, I WAS NOTHING MORE THAN A POWERLESS HUMAN BEING.
nip
pull
pull
BONTEN WAS BORN WITH THE ABILITY TO READ AND INTERPRET HEAVEN'S NET,
I UNDERSTOOD THE NET THAT BINDS THE WORLD...
BUT THE WORLD SEEN THROUGH A SNAKE'S EYES WAS VERY DIFFERENT.
AND THAT WAS WHY SHINSHU'S POWER WAS STOLEN.

AND THE ROLE LEFT TO ME ...
WAS THE MASS ANNIHILATION OF DEMON-KIND.
That's -
How can that be!?
NO MATTER HOW I PHRASE IT, THAT WAS THE TRUTH
.. AND MY INTENT WAS NOT ONLY TO KILL DEMONS ...
BUT TO TURN AGAINST HEAVEN AS WELL.

WHO WOULD WISH FOR DEMONS TO OVERFLOW THE WORLD AND DESTROY ALL HUMANS?
BUT THAT DOESN'T MATTER TO HEAVEN
WITHOUT CONSIDERING THE FEELINGS OF OTHERS, HEAVEN IMPOSES MASSIVE "ADJUSTMENTS."
THERE IS NOTHING WE CAN DO TO SAVE OUR-SELVES
I THOU-GHT ...
WELL
ohohhh
THAT SUCH IDEAS WERE VERY SHALLOW.
UNTIL NOW,
I GUESS.
IT WAS A SPLENDID FAILURE.

I WAS TIRED OF LIVING.
I THINK I'D ALREADY RESIGNED MYSELF TO THAT.
I LASHED OUT RECKLESSLY EVEN THOUGH I WAS UNPREPARED
BUT THE TRUTH IS
I THOUGHT DEATH WOULD BE A RELEASE FROM MY DUTY...
BUT I WAS UNABLE TO DIE.
MY SOUL HAD BEEN PLACED IN THE BODY OF A POWERFUL DEMON WHO HAD LIVED FOR HUNDREDS OF YEARS.
BUT WHY?
FOR WHAT PURPOSE?
I NO LONGER KNEW.
DEMON CREATED WITH A HUMAN SOUL
...
THE BODY OF A DEMON SNAKE
...
CURSE OF IMMORTALITY
...
AS SOMETHING DEMONIC CREATED FROM A MONSTER, I MUST KILL DEMONS FOR THE SAKE OF HUMANITY

SO I USED YOU ...
I ABAND-ONED THE FUTURE TO YOU ...
What kind of fate is this !?
If the Unwritten Page can change the future...
I THOUGHT I COULD FINALLY KILL MY-SELF
Perhaps he can also change Heaven...
GINSHU -SAN ...
PLEASE FOR-GIVE ME

What need is there for the world, when life is suffering?

PEOPLE WOULD STILL NOT HAVE THE FREEDOM TO PURSUE THEIR OWN FUTURE.
BUT THAT WOULD FUNDA-MENTALLY BE THE SAME THING.
I BELIEVE THAT BONTEN WISHES FOR YOU TO REPLACE TEITEN.

THERE'S A DIFFERENCE BETWEEN ACCEPTING THE FUTURE AND HAVING IT FORCED ON YOU, ISN'T THERE?
It would be best if heaven remained empty.
BUT I FAILED.
MAYBE I'M JUST BEING A SORE LOSER? NO MATTER WHAT I SAY NOW, WHAT'S DONE IS DONE.
THE PERSON WHO HAS THE MOST FORCED ON HIM STILL LAUGHS
.....
oh no!
Ii, sorry!
Ahh!
Wow!

WHAT HAVE I SEEN ?
GINSHU -SAN... YOU'RE SO KIND ...
EVEN IF
you're a little weird.
...Still, you're really strong ...
I wish I could have talked to you more ...
I DON'T KNOW ANYTHING BUT I FEEL LIKE I UNDERSTAND SOMETHING NOW.
YOU CAN'T DENY YOURSELF AND I THINK THAT'S OKAY
I THINK MAYBE I ENVIED YOU...
RIKUGOU-SAN, EVEN IF YOU DON'T SEE IT, YOU'VE CHANGED A LITTLE.

Ah...
YEAH, I GUESS I'VE REALIZED HOW DUMB I AM...
EVEN THOUGH I DIDN'T KNOW WHAT I WAS DOING, I GOT CAUGHT UP IN THE SPIRIT OF THINGS AND TRIED TO DO THE RIGHT THING, I THINK...
I DIDN'T ACCOMPLISH ANYTHING.
BUT FROM AN OUTSIDE PERSPECTIVE, I GUESS I DIDN'T DO THAT WELL AT ALL.
... AND I GUESS I PAID FOR MY MISTAKES.
rub rub
... I WISH ...
I COULD HAVE TALKED TO YOU MORE, TOO.

NOT LIKE THIS... MAYBE WE COULD HAVE LAUGHED TOGETHER OVER TEA.
A DREAM... BUT IF IT'S NOT JUST A DREAM...
GRAB

GINSHU-SAN!
GINSHU-SAN, YOU CAN'T DIE UNTIL YOU'VE FULFILLED YOUR DUTY, RIGHT?
?
?
Y... YES...
WELL, GINSHU'S DUTY MIGHT BE OVER...
BUT WH..T ABOUT AYAME-S..N'S DUTY!?
!?
AYAME'S ...
DUTY?
!
WHOA
IT'S YOUR JOB TO BRING PEOPLE HAPPINESS, ISN'T IT!!?
THAT'S IT!!

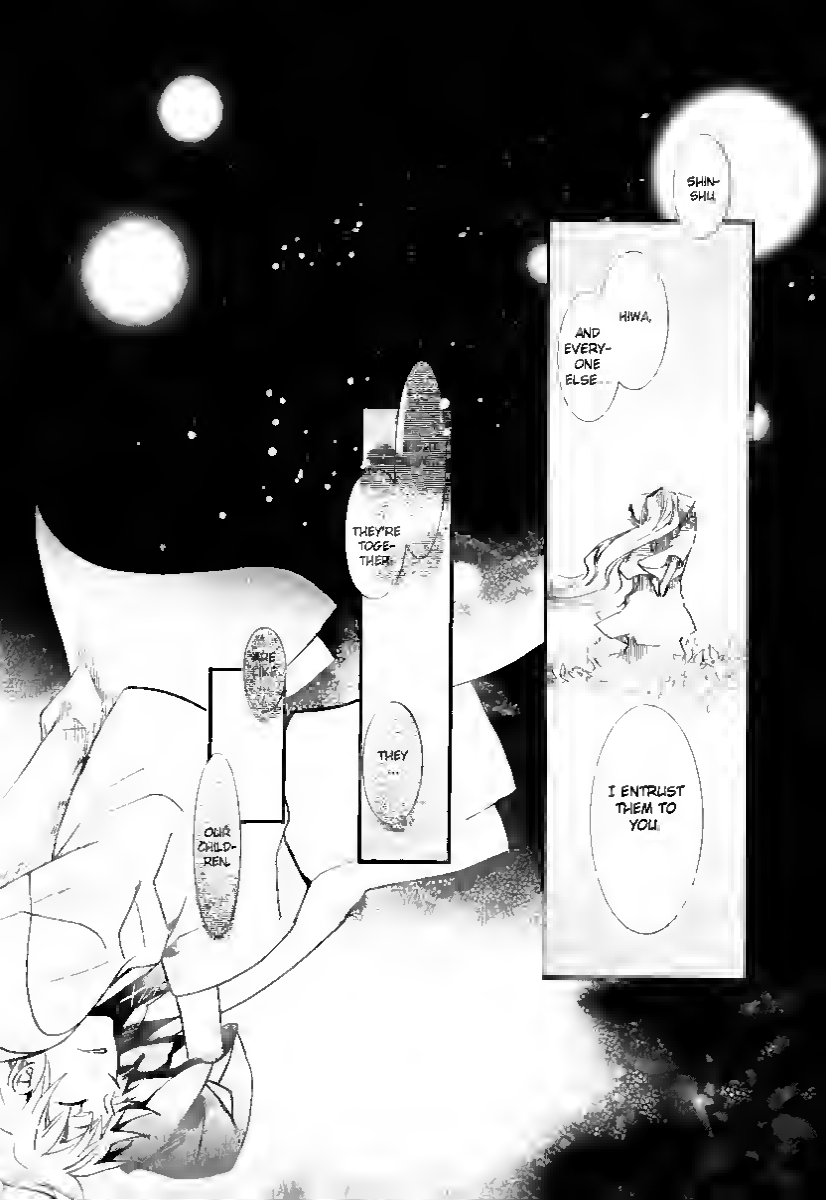
Pfft..
So that's what you're glad to do!
stuttered
SFX: hysterical laughter
SFX: PFFFFFFT
AHAHA HAHA HAHA HAHA HAHA HAHA HAHA HAHA!!
AH HA HA HA HA HA!
rustle
Y...
you're amazing Rikugou-san
WASN'T WHAT HE MEANT

BUT I'M ALREADY LIKE THIS
...DO YOU
DO YOU STILL THINK I CAN DO IT?
CAN I STILL BRING HAPPINESS TO ANYONE ?
YOU CAN!

If you say I can do it, then it's like I've got the strength of a thousand men!!
totally incoherent
But if you say I can't, then, like, I'm gonna freak out...
BUT... I'M THE UN-WRITTEN RAGE OR WHAT-EVER...
I THOUGHT IT WAS GOOD
I mean
UH, SORRY, THAT JUST SLIPPED OUT... I GUESS I WAS TOO FORCEFUL...
...BUT IT'S A GOOD DREAM.
...Haha, if this is my dream, then I must really looks stupid, huh...
Oh yes, you look very silly
STALE

WHETHER THIS DREAM BELONGS TO ME OR WHETHER IT BELONGS TO YOU
SFX: whoosh
OR WHETHER TEITEN DOZED OFF AND LEFT THIS LITTLE BLIND SPOT .. THAT DOESN'T MATTER.
IT SEEMS THE TIME HAS COME FOR YOU TO AWAKEN
GHSHU-SA...
WHOOSH
AH
FOR REAL, THIS TIME

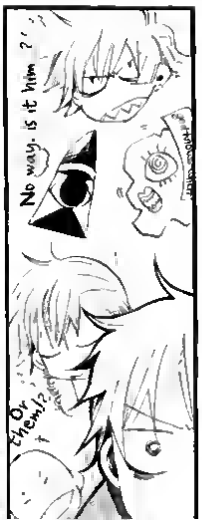
RIKUGOU-SAN! UNLIKE ME, BONTEN HAS THE ABILITY TO TALK WITH TEITEN!
TALK WITH TEITEN!?
SO IT SEEMS BUT THERE IS SURELY A REASON FOR IT.
GIN
THANK YOU, RIKU-GOU-SAN
DOES THAT MEAN HE'S WORKING FOR TEITEN!?
WHEN YOU GET BACK, YOU MUST SPEAK TO HIM!
I'M CERTAIN THAT HE KNOWS SOMETHING!
FOR CRYING FOR ME.
BYAKU ROKU...?
BECAUSE WHETHER HE LIKES IT OR NOT, HE IS STILL UNDER THE PROTECTION OF SOMEONE FROM LONG AGO


SHIN-SHU.
HIWA, AND EVERY-ONE ELSE...
I ENTRUST THEM TO YOU.
THEY...
THEY'RE TOGE-THER.
SURE LIKE...
OUR CHILD-REN.

SFX: CRACK

HUH!?
MOVE AWAY FROM THE BACK WALL!

creak
creak


No way, is it him?!
Or them!?

TSURUU-ME-SAN! WHAT'S GOING ON!?
IT SOUNDS LIKE SOMETHING'S BROKEN THROUGH THE BARRIER AROUND THE BUILDING

...UWAH!
WHAT WAS THAT SOUND!?
...IT CAME FROM OUTSIDE.

SFX: CRASH
AH, THERE YOU ARE, HAKU-TAKU!
POOF

nana-mi

Chapter 51

Favorable Winds

AH, SO THIS IS WHERE YOU WERE, HAKUTAKU!
U...
UTSU-BUSHI-SAN!?
HMM.
YOU SEEM WELL!

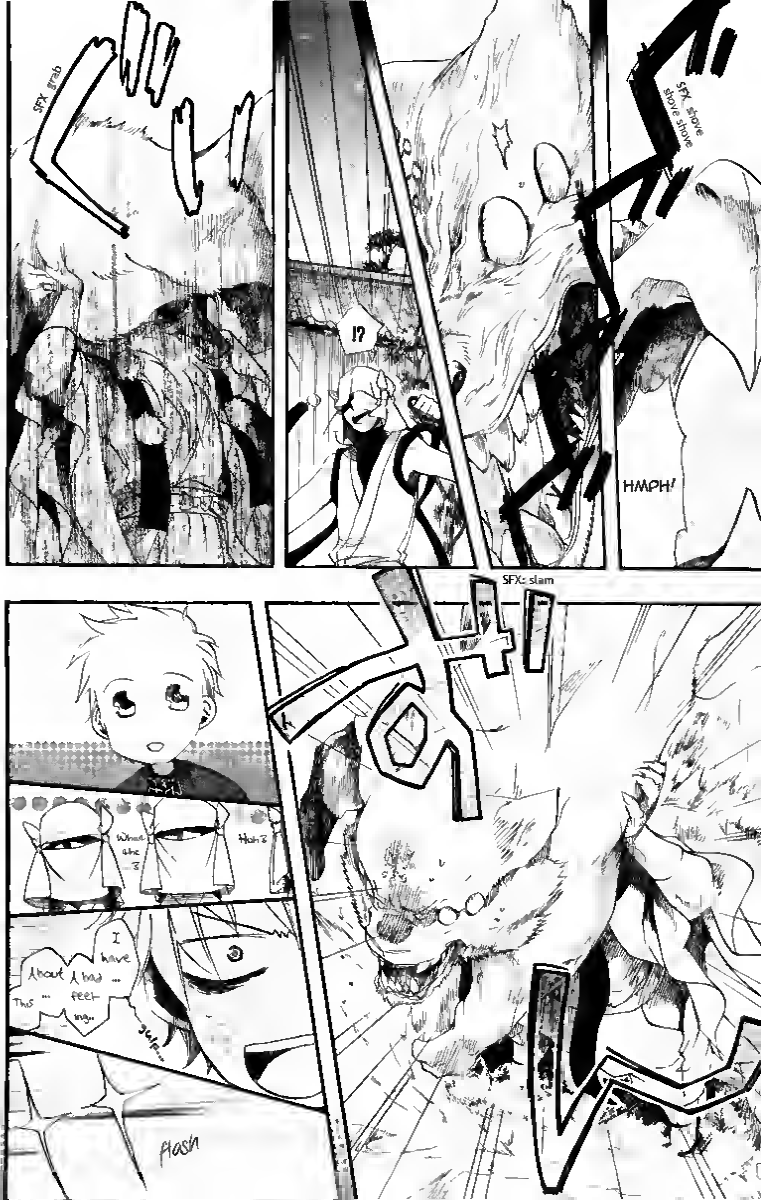
SFX: whoosh
!
SFX: clank
rab
OOF!
MY, MY
SFX: swish
RIGHT ?
YOU KNOW IT'S FOR-BIDDEN FOR YOU TO ENTER THIS PLACE
PUI
WHAT AN ILL-BRED ANIMAL.

drop
drop
drop
KURO TO...
BI...
SAN!?
HEY!
HUH?
WHICH ONE IS ME?
fwoosh
LISTEN UP!
MAKE SURE YOU GET HIM OUT OF HERE SAFELY!
I WILL ...
HOLD THIS POINT!
strain
MM-MM-MMM!
BREATHE
HMPH!
WHAT?
HEY, WAIT!

HMM!
SFX: WOOSH
clink
clink
clink
HE'S STRONG!
FLASH
TCH!
whoosh
BLOW
NEKO-MATA!!

SFX: hiss
smoke
IT GOT ALL SMOKY!
WAH!
HURRY UP AND GET OUT OF HERE!!
cough
WHAT ARE YOU ALL STANDING AROUND FOR!?
Wah!

SFX. PUSH
PUSH PUSH PUSH
!?
OF TAKING HIM, THEN
IF YOU ARE THINK-ING.
!
HEY!
STOP IT!
WAIT A MINUTE!
WAIT!
SHOVE
UTSU-BUSHI-SAN
!?


SFX: grab
!?
SFX: shove shove shove
HMPH!
SFX: slam
What the ?
Hun?
I have about 1 and ... two ... feet ... left.
gulp...
flash

YOU WILL HAVE TO DEFEAT ME FIRST!
SFX. Throw
SFX. thud
SFX. crash
crash crash
GAAAAAHHHHHHHHHH!!!!
AH.

Note: What he really says is "I have night blindness" but "night blindness" is written with the kanji for "bird eyes." So it's a really, really lame pun

WELL NOW, I WONDER HOW YOU'LL KILL THIS ONE.
HAHHHHH...
AH, BENI-CHAN!
YOUR TIMING IS MAG-NIFI-CENT
THANKS!
OH NO, I'LL BE GOING, BROTHER DEAR.
PLEASE TRY NOT TO GET YOURSELF KILLED
AH!
JUST WHERE ARE YOU GOING WITH HIM!!?
WHOOSH

...JERK.
HE'D HAVE TO DEFEAT ME FIRST, RIGHT?
gna-sh
BUT I CAN'T JUST LET ANY GUY GO CHASING AFTER MY SISTER NOW,
CAN I?
YOU MIGHT BE A LITTLE SLOW,
W-WAIT! I CAN'T BENI-SAN!
WELL
LET'S GO BACK HOME, RIKUGOU-SAN.
DRAG-GING A BURDEN ALONG IS TOO DANGER-OUS.
THIS BUILDING IS UNDER ATTACK.
WE HAVE TO RESCUE HER TOO
ABSO-LUTELY NOT.
TSURUUME-SAN IS IN THAT CELL!!
DO YOU WISH TO DIE?
LOOK.
THIS PLACE IS FALLING APART THAT LAST ATTACK DAMAGED THE SUPPORT BEAMS, SO THE WALLS ARE CRUMBLING

I DON'T KNOW WHAT AHEAD OF ME..
AND I DON'T KNOW WHAT'S BEHIND ME
...I DON'T CARE!
WE'VE GOT TO SAVE TSURUU-ME-SAN ..
crack
crumble
crack
OTHERS HAVE BEEN ORDERED TO STAY BEHIND, SO PLEASE CALM DOWN.
RIGHT NOW, YOU ARE THE ONE WHO IS BEING TAR-GETED...
I'M BEGGING YOU!
BUT I'M NOT GOING TO LET ANYONE IMPORTANT TO ME OUT OF MY SIGHT!
IF YOU WON'T HELP HER, THEN I'LL GET HER MYSELF!
BENI-SAN...
I...

I WON'T RUN AWAY!
AND I WON'T LET HER DIE!

ALRIGHT, THEN.

THAT'S NO WAY.
RE-PLACED ... TOO?
tap
FUFU, RIKU-GOU-SAN ..
I WONDER IF YOU WERE REPLACED, TOO.

FOLLOW ME.
AND WE CAN TALK ABOUT THAT
smile
BENI-SAN!?
ARE YOU TALKING ABOUT GINSHU-SAN!?
DID YOU ...
RIKUGOU-SAN, COME THIS WAY.
WH... WHAT!?
WHERE ARE YOU GOING, HAKU-TAKU!?
Can't you wait for me!!?
SORRY, UTSUTSUSHI-SAN! Take care of yourself!
HUH!?
squawk
!?

SHE'LL BE FINE
SHE'S JUST FEVERISH WITH EXHAUS-TION
WITH REST, SHE'LL RECOVER IN NO TIME
REALLY?
Oh
Why did she decide to help after all?
laugh
sweet sound
IS TSURUUME-SAN ALRIGHT?
She's carrying her as if it's nothing.
Carried like she weighs nothing.
THIS IS REALLY ENOUGH
YOU DON'T HAVE TO PRETEND LIKE THAT
BENI-SAN? IF YOU THINK TSURUUME-SAN REALLY WENT CRAZY,
WOULD FEEL HURT IF THIS SORT OF TALK WAS BEING REPEATED BY THE ATTENDANTS?
AND WHO MORE THAT SHINSHU-SAMA.
SHE SCREAMED "WHO ARE YOU!?" DO YOU THINK THAT'S SOMETHING THEY COULD IGNORE?
RIGHT IN FRONT OF SHINSHU-SAMA AND THE PRINCESS HERSELF
!?

RIKUGOU-SAN, WE MUST SEEM LIKE COLD-HEARTED AND CRUEL PEOPLE TO YOU
THAT'S WELL
Ah
No. I don't
I mean
nibble nibble
YOU DON'T?
July
laugh
laugh
laugh
BUT IT'S THE TRUTH

IT'S ALRIGHT
WE DO HAVE THAT SIDE TO US
BUT OVERALL, WE HAVE FAITH THAT WHAT WE DO IS FOR THE BENEFIT OF HUMANKIND OUR KIND
SO WE REGRET NOTHING

RIKUGOU-SAN, YOU ARE GROWING TO CARE FOR THE DEMONS
THERE IS SOMEONE WHO CARES FOR US AS WELL
SOMEONE WHO PROTECTED MY BROTHER AND I AS IF WE WERE HIS OWN CHILDREN

AND THEN MY BROTHER SAID HE WOULD GLADLY SACRIFICE HIMSELF ON THE DEMON PATH FOR MY SAKE... BECAUSE HE CARES FOR ME.
"I BEG OF YOU PLEASE PROTECT HER," HE SAID, BOWING DEEPLY
BECAUSE HE CARES FOR US.
I'M STILL ALIVE
AND THAT'S THE ONLY REASON...
BENI-SAN.
I HOLD ON TO WHAT I CAN, AND I DON'T REGRET WHAT I LOSE
SO I DON'T MIND IF I BECOME A MONSTER
I HAVE YET TO REPAY THE KINDNESS I HAVE RECIEVED

BUT DEMONS ALWAYS PAY THEIR DEBTS!
!?
UWAH!?
FWOOM
GRR

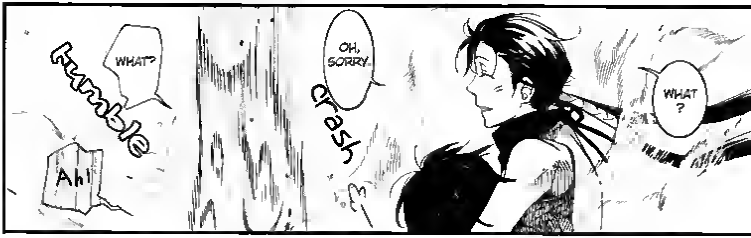
UNLIKE HUMANS
WE DON'T RUN AWAY JUST TO SAVE OUR SKINS
GRUMBLE
GRUMBLE
YOU COULD EVEN SAY IT'S SOMETHING WE'RE KNOWN FOR
TSUYU-KUSA!!
WE CAN DO THIS THE EASY WAY...
GIVE HIM BACK
!

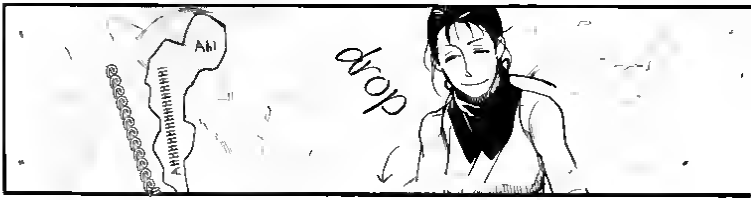
UGH...
YOU THINK WE'LL OBEY YOU?
TSUYU-KUSA!!
OKAY, WE CAN DO THIS THE HARD WAY...
glare
COME ON, I'M WAITING...
Can't you see that Beni-san is carrying someone who's sick?
?!
And not just sick - she's unconscious and suffering!!

Shake
WHAT
Is this really a good time to attack?
Can't you be a little more consi-derate?
sho
cked
YOU DUMBASS!!
I'M NOT DUMB!
ISN'T THAT A BIASED OPINION?
You're the one who's making a big entrance like you're the villain!!
.....
DO YOU
HAVE ANY IDEA
WHAT KIND OF SITUATION
YOU'RE IN RIGHT NOW?
Glare
Glare
Glare

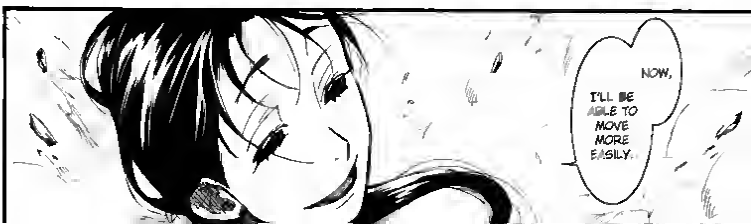
OH...
UM...
WELL...
UH...
THAT'S... WELL...
You were so worried that you came to save me!
You! Worried about little old me?
Smile
We're like, super best buddies now!
Wash-!
You....
SHUT THE FUCK UP!!
KYOOW
What did I say?!
HUH!?

ONCE YOU'VE PREPARED YOURSELF,
COULD YOU PLEASE JUMP DOWN?
grab
grab
crash
HUH?
RIKUGOU-SAN?
attack


WHAT?
rumble
Ah!
OH, SORRY.
crash
WHAT?


Ah!
AHHHHHHHHHHHHH
drop

CLOSE
AHHHHHHHHHHHHH!


NOW,
I'LL BE ABLE TO MOVE MORE EASILY.

DAMN YOU...
WHERE DID YOU PUT THEM?
WOULD YOU LIKE TO SEE FOR YOURSELF?
FIRST, YOU'LL HAVE TO DEAL WITH ME
AL-RIGHT, THEN
press
LET'S FINISH THIS
thump

sssiiiiiiiiide
AHHHHHHHHHHH!
AH!
AHHH!
sssiiiiiiiiide
sssiiiiiiiiide
AHHHHHHHHHHH!
NOOOOOOOOOO!!
Thump
Ugh!
Ouch!

Ohmygod
...
!!
ROLL
ROLL
GAH!!?
thud
open
ARE YOU ALRIGHT?
whisk
whisk
WILL BE PROVIDED FOR YOUR COMPANION
whisk
whisk
MEDICAL TREATMENT
...

slide
WELL,
MAY I OFFER YOU
A CUP OF TEA?

nana-mi

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Chapter 52

Neutrality

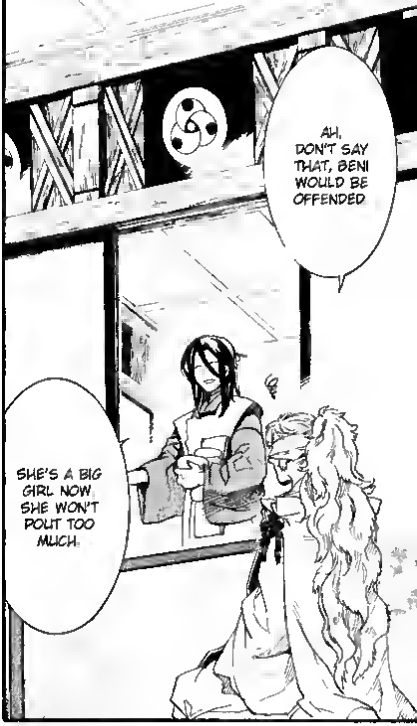
Note: This word is homophonous with another word that means "close-

FUFU?
GO AHEAD, I DIDN'T PUT ANY POISON IN IT?
push
...OF COURSE, I HAVEN'T INTRODUCED MYSELF YET, SO WHY WOULD YOU TRUST ME?
GIGGLE
MY NAME IS...
HIZAME...

Note: Like everyone in Amatsuki, Hizame is named for a Japanese color. "Hizame-iro" is a dark rose color.

But isn't he a bad guy?
Oh?
Nakamuraga Head Clerk
STAMMERAGE
THAT'S THE KIND OF GUY WHO MAKES A STRONG IMPRESSION!
UNDER THE DIRECTION OF SASAKI-DONO I HAVE BEEN COLLECTING PEOPLE INVOLVED WITH STRANGE EVENTS
THAT'S RIGHT
LIKE THAT MAN... AH, HOW WOULD YOU SAY IT IN THE MERCHANT DIALECT? THAT HEAD CLERK
GASP
HEAD CLERK
WHAT'S THIS... YOU'RE MISREPRESENTING YOURSELF, AREN'T YOU?
WHAT'S FUNNY? SO LAUGH
ho
ho
ho
ho
ho
COME NOW, HIZAME-SAMA, YOU'RE SASAKI-SAMA'S RIGHT-HAND OFFICER.
OR...
DO YOU PREFER "LADY IN WAITING?"

AH!


AH, DON'T SAY THAT, BENI WOULD BE OFFENDED
SHE'S A BIG GIRL NOW. SHE WON'T POUT TOO MUCH.

WELL, HELLO
IF IT ISN'T RIKUGOU, THE UN-WRITTEN PAGE

!!!

I AM AINEZU
AND THIS IS KAN-ZOU
WE WERE SENT BY SASAKI-SAMA OF THE ONMYOU BUREAU
WE DIDN'T REALLY HAVE A CHANCE TO TALK LAST TIME, HM?
I'M SO GLAD WE HAVE A CHANCE TO CHAT NOW.
IT SEEMS WE'RE ALREADY ACQUAIN-TED

WHAT ABOUT KU...
BEFORE WE GET INTO THAT,
YOUR FRIEND HERE NEEDS MEDICAL ATTENTION, DOESN'T SHE?
AH
UH
...
YOU'RE IN LUCK! I JUST SO HAPPEN TO BE A TRAINED DOCTOR.
MAY I TAKE A LOOK?
HM...
WILL YOU REALLY HELP HER...?
OF COURSE
SHE'S ON OUR SIDE AFTER ALL...
AND IF I CAN EARN YOUR GOOD WILL,
EVEN A CHILD CAN SEE THAT IT'S JUST GOOD BUSINESS.
THANK YOU SO MUCH...

OH MY
JUST LOOK AT THAT GLARE
HA
CHUCKLE
HA
HA
HA

NAH~ IF THERE'S ANYONE HE HATES, IT'S KANZOU, NOT ME
How poor thing
IT SEEMS HE REALLY DOESN'T LIKE YOU, AINEZU

GIRL-FRIEND
FLOP
SCUM-BAG!?
!?
BECAUSE KANZOU IS THE SCUMBAG WHO STOLE AWAY HIS BELOVED GIRLFRIEND!
Giggle
Why is that?
OH?

Me and Kuchiha aren't together or anything!
It's not like that!!
OOH ??
FUME~
THEN WHAT KIND OF RELATIONSHIP IS IT?

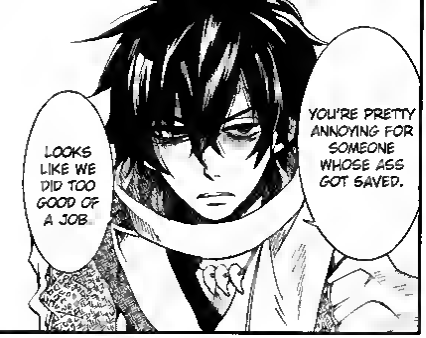
UM...
THAT'S...
KUCHIHA AND I ARE FRIENDS
REALLY GOOD FRIENDS

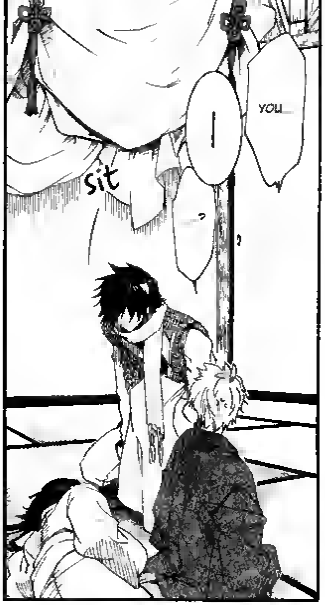
I WONDERED WHY SHE DIDN'T SMILE MORE...
I MEAN, LAUGHING IS GOOD, RIGHT?
AND, UH...
But when you smiled, you were really cute.
WHEN WE FIRST MET,
YOU WERE NOTHING LIKE WHAT I EXPECTED
YOU WERE SO STRONG AND STRICT...
AND YOU PUT YOUR WHOLE HEART INTO EVERYTHING YOU DID
I FELT SO AWKWARD
AND WHEN WE WERE TOGE-THER,

YOU SAID I WAS A HOPELESSLY STUPID AND ANNOYING GUY,
I'VE NEVER MET A GIRL WHO DOESN'T HAVE A NICE SMILE..
SO I WAS HAPPY..
BUT WE WERE TOGETHER,
I SEE~~
OOOOH
SHOCK
..I MEAN, SHE'S NOT LIKE ANY OF THE GIRLS I KNEW BEFORE, BUT SHE ALSO CONFUSES ME A LOT MORE THAN ANY OF THOSE GIRLS..
AND I THINK WE GREW CLOSER LITTLE BY LITTLE

KUCHIHA-SAN REPRESENTS A "DIFFERENT POINT OF VIEW" FOR YOU
IT IS DIFFERENT FOR EVERYONE, EVEN ME
DIFFERENT WAYS OF THINKING, DIFFERENT WAYS OF LIVING
Am I having a brain fart!?
SO, BASICALLY,
!
A PERSON LIKE THAT WOULD CERTAINLY BE PRECIOUS TO YOU
PEOPLE NATURALLY ASSOCIATE WITH OTHERS WHO SHARE THE SAME INTERESTS AND VALUES
PEOPLE WITH DIFFERENT IDEAS TEND TO FIGHT
THAT'S HOW YOU FEEL ABOUT US RIGHT NOW
...
HOWEVER
WE COULD ALSO SHOW YOU A "DIFFERENT POINT OF VIEW,"
smile
COULD WE NOT?

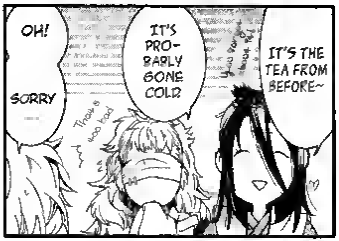
SLAM
...OF COURSE, THERE'S STILL THE MATTER OF THAT SCUMBAG KANZOU STEALING YOUR BELOVED KUCHIHA-SAN..
WHO'S A SCUMBAG?
.....
GAH!!
SHUT UP.
OH?
YOU WERE LISTENING?
GLARE GLARE GLARE
Snap
Hmph. The way I see it, he's the scumbag


LOOKS LIKE WE DID TOO GOOD OF A JOB...
YOU'RE PRETTY ANNOYING FOR SOMEONE WHOSE ASS GOT SAVED.


YOU...
I
sit

...OH
THANKS
!!

NEVER MIND THAT, JUST GIVE HER THE TEA
IT WILL RESTORE HER ENERGY
slide


OH!
SORRY
IT'S PROBABLY GONE COLD
IT'S THE TEA FROM BEFORE~

FOR ME?
push
HERE YOU GO

SHE OUGHT TO WAKE UP SOON.
Is this... Okay?
THANK YOU.
OH NO!
STILL, I FEEL LIKE I OUGHT TO THANK SOMEBODY....
IT'S NO PROBLEM!
THE OPPORTUNITY TO HONE MY CRAFT IS ENOUGH FOR ME <3
GLARE GLARE GLARE
...

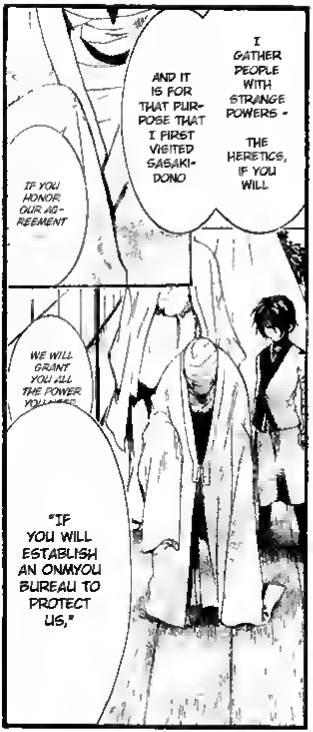
GLARE
GLARE
GLARE
HA!
OH, KANZOLI
HAHA
HAHA

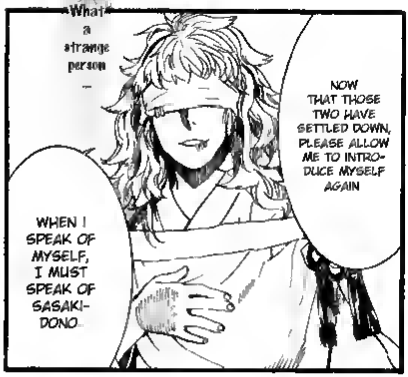
THAT WOMAN ...

YOU SHOULDN'T GLARE SO
IT ISN'T NICE.

AND AINEZU, YOU DON'T HAVE TO AGITATE THEM.
IT'S NOT VERY PROFESSIONAL, IS IT?

BUT SHE DIDN'T HAVE TO RAISE HER VOICE AT ALL.
SHE GIVES THE IMPRESSION OF A REFINED, ELEGANT OLDER WOMAN ...
SHE GOT THOSE TWO TO BEHAVE ...


I GATHER PEOPLE WITH STRANGE POWERS - THE HERETICS, IF YOU WILL
AND IT IS FOR THAT PURPOSE THAT I FIRST VISITED SASAKI-DONO
IF YOU HONOR OUR AGREEMENT
WE WILL GRANT YOU ALL THE POWER YOU
"IF YOU WILL ESTABLISH AN ONMYOU BUREAU TO PROTECT US,"


NOW THAT THOSE TWO HAVE SETTLED DOWN, PLEASE ALLOW ME TO INTRODUCE MYSELF AGAIN
WHEN I SPEAK OF MYSELF, I MUST SPEAK OF SASAKI-DONO
What a strange person...

THAT IS BECAUSE I ADVISE SASAKI-DONO ON MATTERS RELATING TO THE ONMYOU BUREAU
!

"THE I WILL GRANT YOU THE POWER TO SEE DEMONS,"
I SAID.
DOESN'T IT?
WELL, THAT CHANGES THINGS,
THOSE WHO CANNOT SEE DEMONS CANNOT DEAL WITH THEM.
THAT'S A RELIEF
WE WILL UPHOLD OUR PROMISE
WE WILL COME OUR RENTH
IF I'M ABLE TO UNDERSTAND DEMONS
WHAA-AAT!?

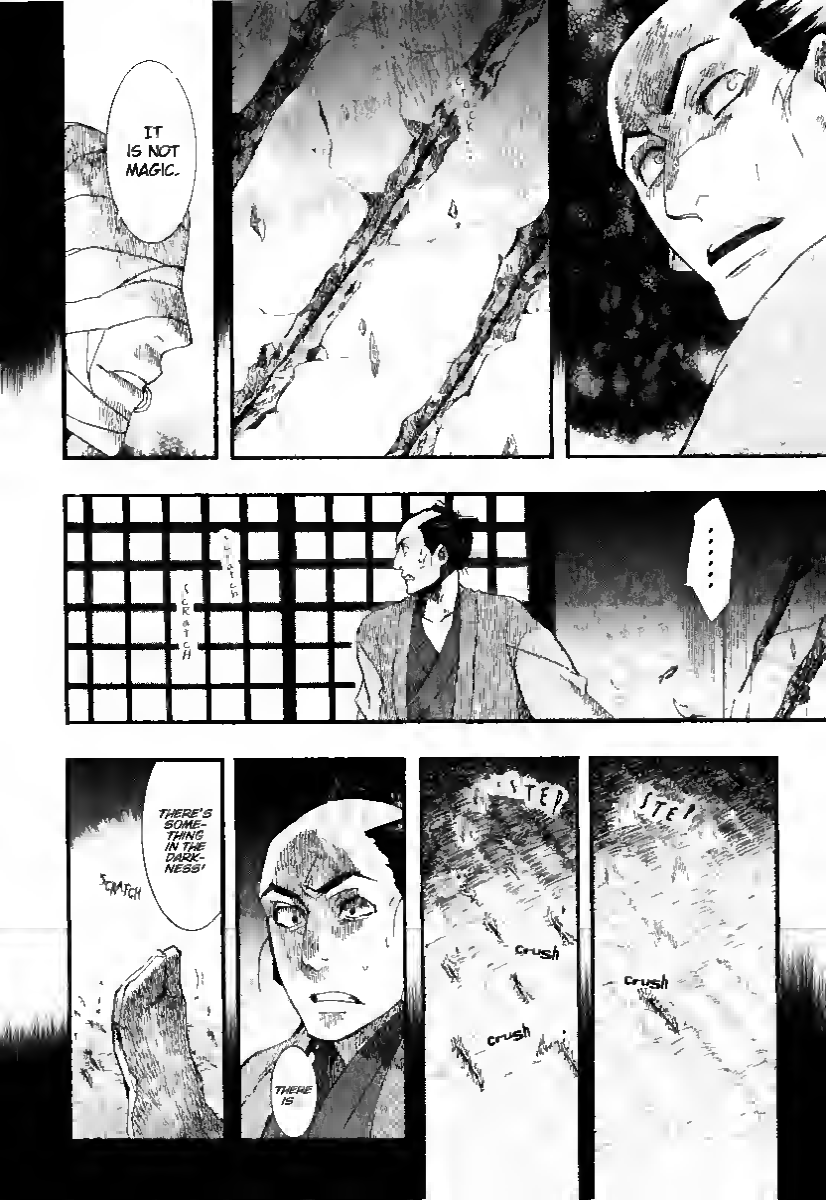
HAVEN'T YOU HEARD? SASAKI-SAMA WAS ORIGINALLY A NORMAL PERSON WHO COULDN'T SEE DEMONS.
. . . OH ...
HE COULDN'T BECOME AN EXORCIST OR WORK FOR THE SHOGUNATE GOVERNMENT.
BECAUSE OF THAT, SASAKI-SAMA TRADED "SIGHT" ...
FOR THE POWER TO "SEE."
BUT I THOUGHT SASAKI-SAN WAS JUST BLIND...
. . . . .
HE GAVE UP HIS ABILITY TO SEE AS A HUMAN ...
SO HE'D BE ABLE TO SEE DEMONS.

SLAM
DAMN IT...
WHAT KIND OF HIGH-LEVEL GOVERNMENT POST IS THIS!?

I'VE LIVED IN THE SHADOWS ALL THIS TIME AS MY BROTHER'S RIGHT HAND MAN...
Crumple
IS THIS ALL THERE IS?
THEN I MIGHT AS WELL CUT MY GUT OPEN AND KILL MYSELF!
shuffle
THAT DOES NOT HAVE TO BE THE CASE.
SH
OCK
!?
WHO'S THERE!?
RIGHT NOW YOU WOULD GIVE YOUR LIFE ... TO PROTECT EIJI FROM THOSE "CREATURES."
YOU ARE SASAKI TAJIROU-DONO, CORRECT?
.....!?

I AM CALLED HIZAME
I HAVE COME TODAY ...
TO GRANT YOUR WISH IN EARNEST.
LOOM
!?
HOW DID YOU GET IN HERE!? THIS IS A PRIVATE RESIDENCE, NOT SOME KIND OF SHOP!!
!?
I DID NOT COME HERE TO BARGE INTO YOUR "SHOP."
laugh
laugh
--I CAME HERE TO TELL YOU SOME-THING.
!?
YOU MAY BE TIRED OF YOUR CURRENT POSITION, BUT YOUR WORK IS NOT WITHOUT MERIT.
IN A SENSE ... MORE SO THAN YOUR BROTHER, YOU ARE AT THE HEART OF THE GOV-ERNMENT.

To fight demons?
Do you have what it takes
reach


IT IS NOT MAGIC.
CTOCK...
.....
SCRATCH
SCRATCH
THERE'S SOMETHING IN THE DARKNESS!
SCRATCH
THERE IS
STEP
STEP
Crush
Crush
Crush

DO YOU HAVE THE STRENGTH TO FIGHT OFF THOSE WHO WOULD HARM YOU?
DO YOU BELIEVE THAT THE ANCIENT WORLD CONTINUES TO EXIST IN THE SHADOWS OF THIS WORLD?
IF SO...
THEN I WILL GRANT YOU THE EYES WITH WHICH TO SEE HOW TO FIGHT.

HELLO THERE!
YOU MUST BE THE BOY THAT HIZAME-SAMA WANTED TO MEET.
I CAN TELL JUST BY LOOK-ING THAT YOU'RE NO ORDINARY KID.
You're ...
HIZAME-SAMA'S MESSEN-GER.
Oh!
I'M JUST AN ABSO-LUTELY NORMAL DOCTOR.
Aren't you kind of young?
I GUESS SO!
I HAVE A FLAW-LESS MEMO-RY.
BUT IT'S NOT JUST ME -- YOU, TOO, CAN LEARN ALL SORTS OF THINGS.

SUCH AS...
A PERSON'S VITAL PRESSURE POINTS
OR HOW TO TELL A POISONOUS PLANT FROM ONE THAT CAN BE USED AS MEDICINE
OR WHAT KIND OF WOUND WOULD BE FATAL,
AND HOW TO SAVE THAT PERSON'S LIFE

And how to make the most delicious Western-style cakes,
And how to prepare an excellent black tea!

I HEARD YOU'D TAKE IN WEIRD PEOPLE AND GIVE THEM A PLACE WHERE THEY CAN PUT THEIR POWERS TO USE.
IS THAT TRUE?
And how to remove troublesome stains from clothing!
THAT'S ENOUGH! I ONLY WANT TO KNOW ONE THING.

Note: "Yata Bikuni" also called "Happyaku Bikuni" or "Yachikuni", is a famous Japanese mermaid legend
I, Hizame... no, I who am called "Yata Bikuni,"
Shall gather all those with power in one sweep.
Of course!
Sasaki-dono, if you uphold your end of the bargain,
We will grant you great power.

nana-mi
draws | doodles
fanfiction | sometimes
manga | moe, ciel emoand
games | ga
guilty gear
melty

CONTACT
kit_the_kat1109@yahoo.com
http://community.livejournal.com/hana_mi

A DEMON HUNTING ORGANIZATION FORMED WITHIN THE GOVERNMENT BY SASAKI TADAJIROU. ORIGINALLY, IT WAS ESTABLISHED TO CARRY OUT MEDIATION AND NEGOTIATION BETWEEN THE GOVERNMENT AND THE SAKAGAMI SHRINE, WHICH HAD POLITICAL INFLUENCE ON THE LEVEL OF THE IMPERIAL COURT.

WITH A NUMBER OF GOVERNMENT OFFICIALS CONCERNED ABOUT THE DEMON ISSUE, IT WOULDN'T BE AN EXAGERRATION TO SAY THAT THEY ARE INFLUENTIAL ADVISORS TO THE SHOGUN.

FOR THAT REASON, THE ORGANIZATION INITIALLY POSED AS A POWERLESS OFFICE UNTIL IT WAS ABLE TO GAIN THE SHOGUN'S DEEP TRUST FOR ITS ABILITY TO HANDLE STRANGE AND SUPERNATURAL AFFAIRS.

THUSLY, SASAKI TADAJIROU WAS ABLE TO AMASS CONSIDERABLE POWER WITHIN THE GOVERNMENT.

ALTHOUGH THEY PRESENT A UNITED FRONT, THE EXTERMINATION METHODS OF THE ONMYOU BUREAU'S SPECIALISTS DIFFER FROM THOSE OF THE SAKAGAMI SHRINE, AND THE TWO GROUPS MAINTAIN NEUTRAL ASSOCIATION WITH EACH OTHER.

THE ORGANIZATION'S KEY MEMBERS ARE DRAWN ENTIRELY FROM THE SAMURAI CLASS. THERE ARE MERCHANTS, DOCTORS, SCIENTISTS, AS WELL AS FORMER CRIMINALS, AND PEOPLE WITH MYSTERIOUS BACKGROUNDS.

CURRENTLY, THEY ARE INVESTIGATING THE SAKAGAMI SHRINE'S RESPONSE TO THE RAMPANT DEMON INFESTATION IN EDO, AND ARE PREPARING TO MAKE A REPORT TO THE SHOGUN.

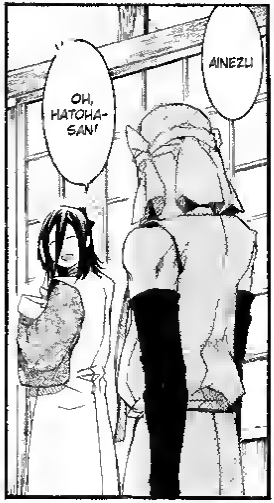
天津
Amatsuki-53
Mermaid's Illusion Part.N

hmm?
hmm?
hmm?
hmm?
hmm?

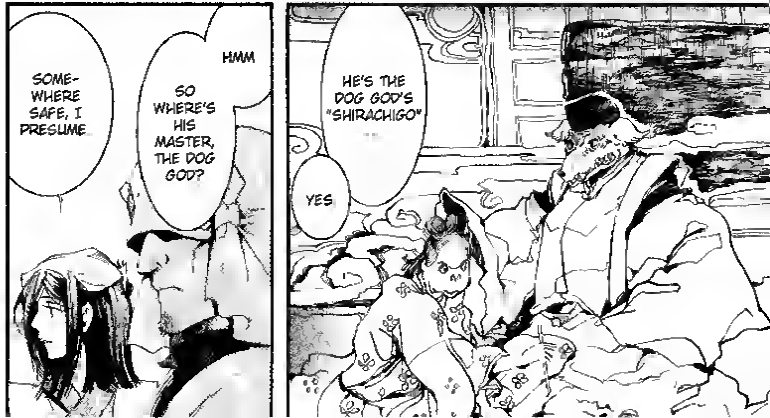
...BRO-THER?
SHHH
BRO-THER...?
BRO-THER!
LOOK AT THIS, BENI-CHAN! IT'S REALLY COOL!
.....?
grrr
MISS
WHAT IS IT, BRO-THER?

SCRATCH
SCRATCH
IT'S MY FRIEND; I PLAY WITH IT.
BOTHER, THAT'S...
COME ON, IT'S NO BIG DEAL
LOOM
IT'S NOT A "DEMON" OR ANYTHING.

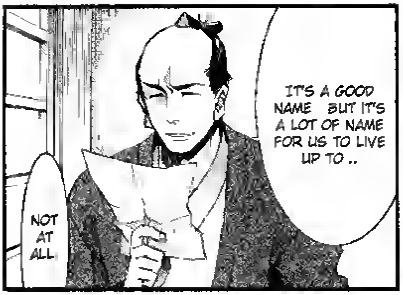
Note: Hatoha" is also a Japanese color. It's sort of a greyish

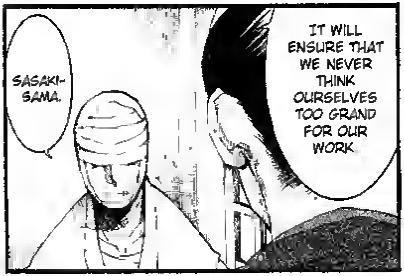


Note: A shirachigo is a small demon servant that accompanies the Inugami in Tonyama Sekien's Illustrated Night Parade of 100 Demons.

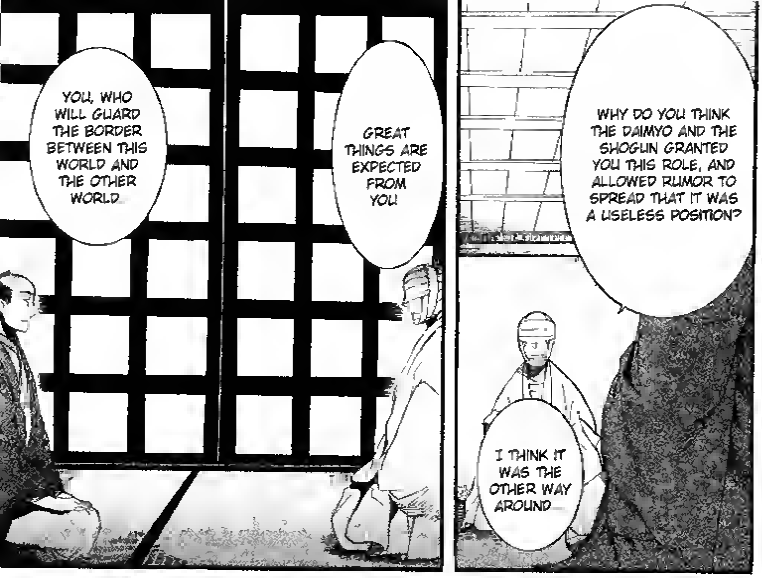


WHAT!?
YOU MEAN HE CAME HERE TO SCOUT OUT LODGINGS FOR HIS MASTER!?
MAYBE... OR MAYBE YOU COULD SAY HE'S STAYING AT THE KENNEL WHILE HIS MASTER IS AWAY...
YOU'RE AN IDIOT
HAHA-
HE SEEMS TO KNOW WHERE HE BELONGS
BUT HE'S SEARCHING FOR SOME-ONE...
HMM
PERHAPS HIS MASTER REALLY IS IN HIDING SOMEWHERE...
SO...
SO DO YOU HAVE A MEETING WITH HII-SAMA?
RIGHT AFTER THIS, YES
SHE'S BUSY RIGHT NOW...
HMPH
PERHAPS WE ARE BEING WATCHED
OH, IS IT SASAKI-DONO?
YES

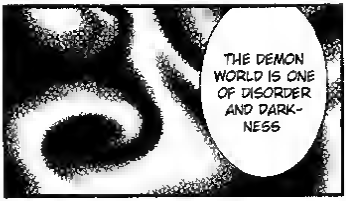




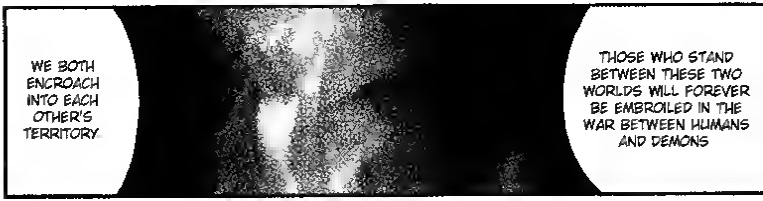
NOTE: ABE-NO-SEIMEI WAS A FAMOUS ONMYOUJI (SORCERER) IN THE HEIAN PERIOD


YOU, WHO WILL GUARD THE BORDER BETWEEN THIS WORLD AND THE OTHER WORLD
GREAT THINGS ARE EXPECTED FROM YOU
WHY DO YOU THINK THE DAIMYO AND THE SHOGUN GRANTED YOU THIS ROLE, AND ALLOWED RUMOR TO SPREAD THAT IT WAS A USELESS POSITION?
I THINK IT WAS THE OTHER WAY AROUND...

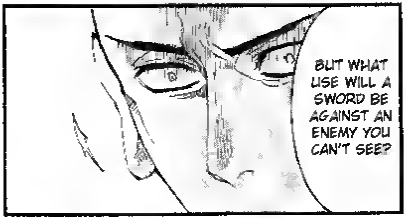
FOR AN IMMEASURABLE TIME THEY HAVE LIVED ALONGSIDE THE HUMAN WORLD KEEPING WATCH OVER BOTH WORLDS. THEIR WORLD IS THE WORLD OF MONSTERS
OH THE OTHER SIDE, THE DEMON WORLD
THEY SEE NOTHING, THEY KNOW NOTHING. THEY BELIEVE THERE IS NOTHING IN THIS WORLD OTHER THAN HUMANS AND HUMAN CONCERNS.
ON ONE SIDE, THE HUMAN WORLD
AND WE ARE IN THE MIDDLE


THE DEMON WORLD IS ONE OF DISORDER AND DARK-NESS

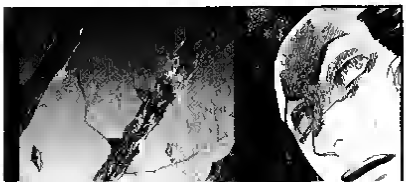
THE HUMAN WORLD IS ONE OF NATIONS AND LEADERS


WE BOTH ENCROACH INTO EACH OTHER'S TERRITORY
THOSE WHO STAND BETWEEN THESE TWO WORLDS WILL FOREVER BE EMBROILED IN THE WAR BETWEEN HUMANS AND DEMONS

BUT TO LOSE WOULD BE TO SEE ONE'S WORLD ANNIHI-LATED


BUT WHAT USE WILL A SWORD BE AGAINST AN ENEMY YOU CAN'T SEE?

SO THIS
THAT'S INSANE
IS ENOUGH TO PRO-VOKE YOU, I SEE



... SOMEONE THAT IMPORTANT? I DON'T EVEN KNOW THEM.
... NOR DO I.
UNTIL NOW, THE ONLY ONES FIGHTING IN THAT SPACE BETWEEN WORLDS HAVE BEEN THE PEOPLE OF SAKAGAMI SHRINE.
I WENT THERE FOR AN AUDIENCE WITH THEIR HOLY PRINCESS A FEW DAYS AGO...
THERE ARE RUMORS ABOUT THE SAKAGAMI SHRINE...
I'VE HEARD THAT THE HOLY PRINCESS HAS THE POWER TO SEE THE FUTURE
BOTH WITHIN THE GOVERNMENT...
AND THE IMPERIAL COURT
WHAT, PRECOGNITION?
YES, AND BECAUSE OF IT,
SHE IS VERY INFLUENTIAL.
PERHAPS YOU'VE PUT TOO MUCH FAITH IN THE POWERFUL INFLUENCE OF THE SAKAGAMI SHRINE.
AND IN THEIR ABILITY TO CONTROL THE DEMONS THAT WOULD DESTROY OUR WORLD.

!
FOR THE SAKE OF SOMETHING LIKE THIS
THESE TWO EYES ARE OF NO IMPORTANCE TO ME
VERY WELL
SLIDE
MY BLOOD
SULP
THAT'S

rustle
I ALREADY TOLD YOU
I AM CALLED "YAOBIKUNI", THE 800 YEAR OLD WOMAN.
LONG AGO, I ATE A MERMAID'S FLESH... AND THE MERMAID CONSUMED ME
WE BECAME AS ONE.
——!!?
PERHAPS BECAUSE I MERGED WITH A DEMON, I GAINED A PHENOMENAL HEALING ABILITY
SMALL WOUNDS WILL CLOSE QUICKLY ON THEIR OWN
IF MY ARM IS TORN OFF, IT CAN BE REATTACHED
unroll
unroll
EVEN IF I AM GRAVELY INJURED, I WILL RECOVER WITHOUT DIFFICULTY
AND I DO NOT GROW OLDER.
WHEN PEOPLE FIND OUT, THEY'RE STUNNED BY MY LONG LIFE.
rustle

WITH THIS INDESTRUCTIBLE BODY, I CANNOT DIE.
!!!
FORGIVE ME IF I OFFEND YOUR EYES.
BUT YOU WILL SEE MY ABNORMALITY WITH ONE GLANCE.
WHAT IN THE WORLD IS THIS ...!?
OH
HO
HO-
PERHAPS IT'S A BIT TOO SOON TO TELL YOU ABOUT MYSELF.
I HATE MEN WHO RUSH INTO THINGS WITHOUT THINKING.
F...
FORGIVE ME.
OHO
HO
HO-
LAUGH
SFX shock

OHO HO~
HO
HO~
Waahh that's
HO~
HO~
OH, THEN WHAT IS IT? ARE YOU A GOOD, HONEST MAN, OR ARE YOU A LIAR?
ER, THAT'S NOT WHAT I MEANT...
MY, HOW FLATTERING FOR A PLAIN-LOOKING GIRL LIKE MYSELF
I SEE THAT YOU ARE SINCERE
YOU WIN...
YOU'RE A CRAFTY ONE...
I FEEL LIKE I'M BEING SCOLDED BY MY MOTHER...
WHAT DO I DO WITH THIS?
ALRIGHT, LET'S SAY I BELIEVE YOU.

PLEASE GOUGE OUT YOUR OWN EYES AND SPLASH SOME OF IT IN
YOU WILL NO LONGER BE ABLE TO SEE THE HUMAN WORLD AS YOU DO NOW,
COLORS WILL FADE AND FORMS WILL CRUMBLE.
WHAT YOU NOW THINK OF AS "SIGHT" WILL BECOME BLINDNESS
MY BLOOD WILL QUICKEN THE HEALING.
AND...
WHEN THEY HAVE HEALED,

IN EXCHANGE FOR THOSE EYES WHICH SEE THE HUMAN WORLD,
YOU'LL BE ABLE TO SEE THROUGH BLINDFOLD OR DARKNESS,
WHEN YOU RECIEVE MY "DEMON EYES."
NEITHER HUMANS NOR DEMONS CAN SEE WITHOUT COLOR OR FORM
IN ORDER FOR YOU TO live as a demon, YOUR SIGHT WILL NEED TO RECOVER.
!
YOUR EYES ALONE WILL BECOME A DEMON'S.
AND WITH THAT, YOU WILL BE ABLE TO FIGHT THEM
!

YOU MUST BE RESOLUTE IN YOUR PREPARED-NESS.
ONCE THE DEED IS DONE, YOU CANNOT GO BACK.
WITH THIS, I SHALL DEVOTE MY BODY TO THE GOVERN-MENT.
I'M READY
SPLASH

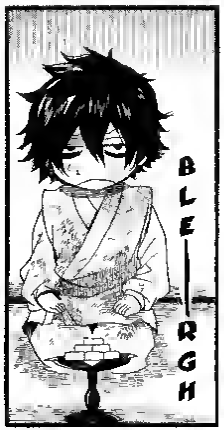
I WAS BORN A SAMURAI.
MY FATE WAS ALREADY DECIDED THEN.
whoosh

DON'T WORRY! COME ON, IT'S NOT FAR TO THE TEMPLE
IT WILL BE DARK SOON.
.....?
SHAMON-SAMA?
HUH?
OH, SORRY
.....
I SEE.
Pat
shake
shake
IS SOME-THING WRONG?

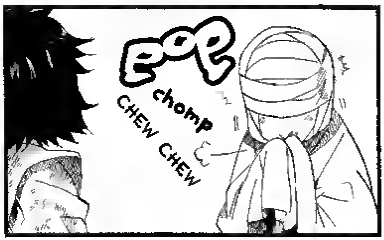
I DON'T PUT MUCH FAITH IN THE QUALITIES OF PRIESTS BUT THIS IS THE BEST I CAN DO
KEEP TREATING HER LIKE A NORMAL CHILD
IT'S BETTER FOR HER
PROTECT THIS GIRL WITH ALL YOUR POWER PRIEST
!
.....
AND PAYBACKS ARE A BITCH.
IF YOU DON'T, WE'LL MEET AGAIN...

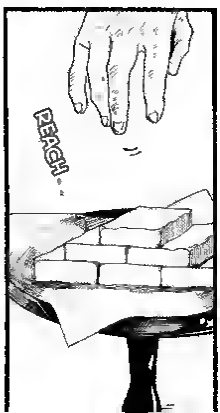
SHAMON-SAMA?
?
...
HMM, HMM.
?
YOU THERE, KUCHIHA?
?
YEAH
OF COURSE I AM.
OKAY
LET'S GO EAT SOME SOBA NOODLES!
YOU WERE STARING OUT

HUNGRY, ARE YOU?
cre ak
SURPRISE
COME WITH ME.
.....
glare
open

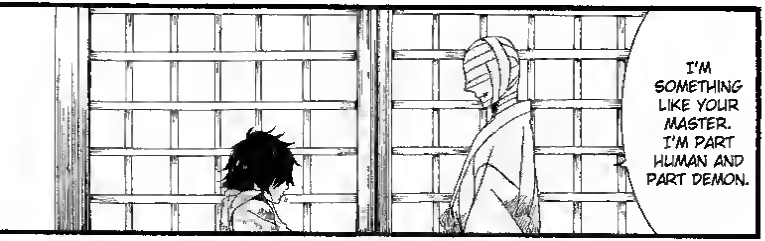


* Note: Kinitsuba are cakes made from bean paste (or sometimes sweet potato) that are covered in a very thin layer of wheat flour crust.





YOU'RE A SHIRAC-HIGO, RIGHT?
YOU CAME LOOKING FOR YOUR MASTER, THE DOG GOD DIDN'T YOU?
.....
YOU'RE
ME?


I'M SOMETHING LIKE YOUR MASTER. I'M PART HUMAN AND PART DEMON.

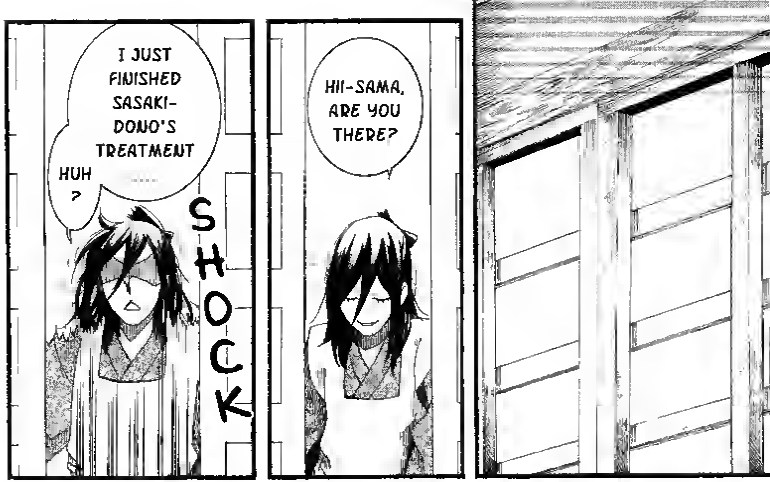
SHIIIN
!!!

THAT IS WHY I HUNT DEMONS

ISN'T THAT SILLY?
SO IN ORDER TO PROVE THAT I AM NOT AN ENEMY OF HUMANS, I HUNT DEMONS
BECAUSE OF THE WAY I AM, I CANNOT LIVE IN THE HUMAN WORLD.
AND MANY IN THE DEMON WORLD WHO FEEL THE SAME WAY.
THERE ARE CERTAINLY A LOT OF PEOPLE WHO THINK SO...
AND TO LOVE AS A HUMAN
I WANT TO LIVE ...
BUT I WANT TO BE HUMAN
AND IF YOU MASTER FEELS THE SAME WAY, THEN I WILL WELCOME HER TOO.
OUR HATRED FOR DEMONS IS JUST THE OTHER SIDE OF OUR LOVE FOR HUMANS
SO I HAVE BEEN GATHERING LIKE-MINDED PEOPLE.

I WANT TO GIVE YOU ...
A PLACE WHERE YOU CAN BREATHE EASILY.
I LIVE FOR THE SAKE OF MY SUFFERING BRETHREN
AND FROM NOW ON, I WILL LIVE FOR YOUR SAKE AS WELL.

IT IS FORTUNATE THAT YOU CAME HERE.
YOU'VE GROWN STRONG FOR ONE SO YOUNG.
WHAT GOOD CHILD.


HII-SAMA, ARE YOU THERE?
I JUST FINISHED SASAKI-DONO'S TREATMENT
HUH ?
SHOCK

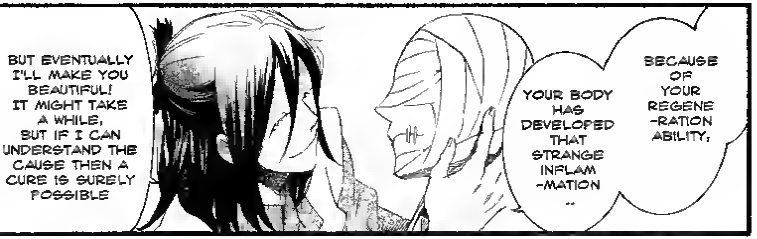
OH, THANK YOU, AINEZU
STAAA
AARE
.....
HOW DOES HE LOOK ?
UH ...
G... GOOD, I GUESS
IS THAT SO ?

THAT'S RIGHT!
YOU CAN BARELY RECOGNIZE HIM ANYMORE. CAN YOU?
pat
HE'S MUCH BETTER.
.....
OH
OH
OH
~
YOU DON'T HAVE TO LOOK QUITE SO SHOCKED, YOU KNOW
SO CUTE!
WE'LL HAVE TO FIND HIM SOME SUITABLE CLOTHING, OF COURSE
SLURP
RUN RUN RUN
FLINCH
AH!
JUMP

FAINT
SHOCK!!!
run run run run
WHY ...
THAT LITTLE ...
laugh laugh
laugh laugh
OH
OH
OH
OH
HII-SAMA!?
Are you running away, you little brat!?
...WOULD YOU PLEASE STOP MEETING PEOPLE WITHOUT AN ESCORT?
WHAT IF SOMETHING HAD HAPPENED TO YOU?
OHO HO ~
I'M NOT AFRAID OF BEING ASSASSINATED BY A LITTLE BOY.
giggle
giggle
giggle
COULD YOU PLEASE
NOT MAKE ME WORRY SO MUCH?
OKAY?
GLARE
GULP
...I'M SORRY

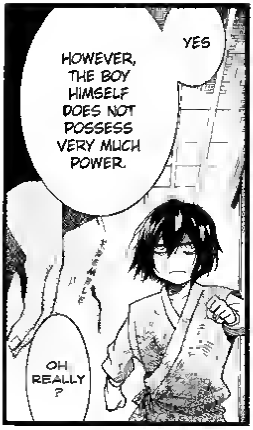
SOME -ONE I CARE DEEPLY FOR
YOU'RE SOMEONE VERY RARE AND PRECIOUS TO ME

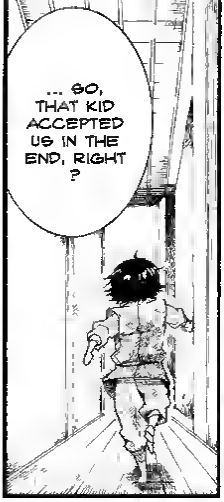
OF COURSE !
I WONDER, WILL YOU STILL STAY WITH ME WHEN I HAVE A NORMAL HUMAN BODY ?


BUT EVENTUALLY I'LL MAKE YOU BEAUTIFUL! IT MIGHT TAKE A WHILE, BUT IF I CAN UNDERSTAND THE CAUSE THEN A CURE IS SURELY POSSIBLE
YOUR BODY HAS DEVELOPED THAT STRANGE INFLAM -MATION ..
BECAUSE OF YOUR REGENE -RATION ABILITY,

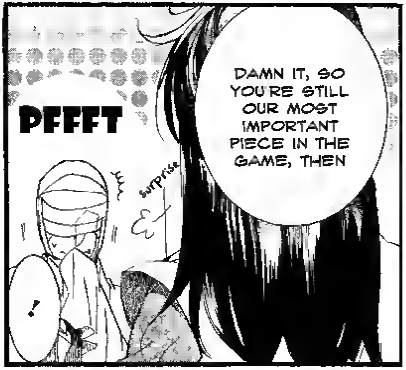
YOUR CONTRIBUTION TO SCIENCE, YOUR GRATITUDE TOWARDS TEST ANIMALS
YOU SPEAK OF YOUR PASSION FOR MEDICINE,

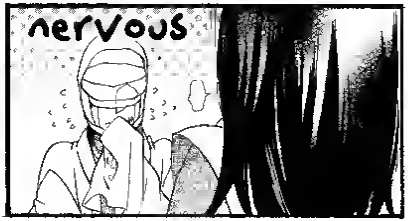
WHEN YOU SPEAK OF "LOVE" AND THAT SORT OF THING
.....

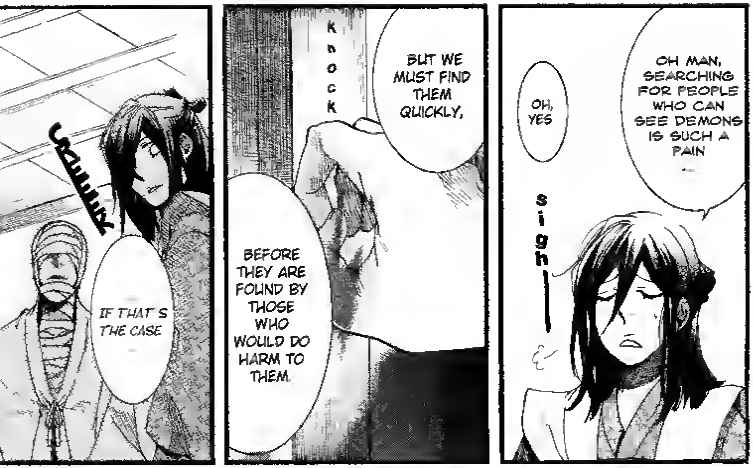

YES
HOWEVER, THE BOY HIMSELF DOES NOT POSSESS VERY MUCH POWER.
OH REALLY ?


... SO, THAT KID ACCEPTED US IN THE END, RIGHT ?

...
OKAY, I GET IT I'LL GO LOOK FOR MORE
I SEE !
hahaha
laugh
laugh


PFFFT
surprise
!
DAMN IT, SO YOU'RE STILL OUR MOST IMPORTANT PIECE IN THE GAME, THEN


nervous


OH MAN, SEARCHING FOR PEOPLE WHO CAN SEE DEMONS IS SUCH A PAIN...
OH, YES
sigh
BUT WE MUST FIND THEM QUICKLY,
knock
BEFORE THEY ARE FOUND BY THOSE WHO WOULD DO HARM TO THEM.
IF THAT'S THE CASE...

THEN THIS IS A GOOD OPPORTUNITY...
TO MAKE A HOUSE CALL

SABAKI-BAMA...
ARE YOU ALRIGHT?
I JUST HEARD FROM A SUBORDINATE
THERE'S A VARIETY SHOP IN NIHONBASHI...

BENI-CHAN ...!?
A VERY STRANGE CASE WAS REPORTED TO THE POLICE
GROWL

nana-mi

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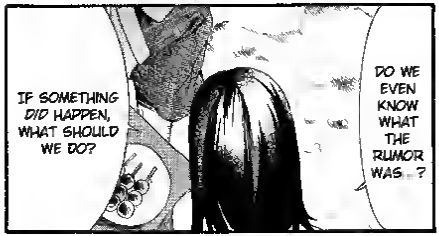
Chapter 54
Mermaid's Illusion - Part 2

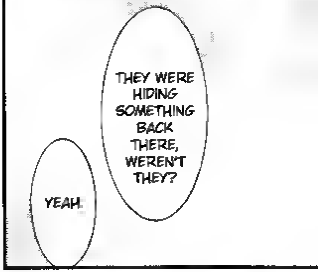
...SO WHAT YOU'RE SAYING IS...
IS THAT SO? I THOUGHT YOU CALLED FOR OUR ASSISTANCE, TROUBLESOME AS WE ARE
YAMA-SHITA-SAMA?
YES
THERE HAVEN'T BEEN ANY UNUSUAL OCCURRENCES...?
MY APOLO-GIES.
SOME OF THE YOUNGSTERS AROUND HERE JUMP TO WILD CONCLUSIONS
AND THAT'S HOW WE ENDED UP REQUESTING UNNEEDED SUPPORT.
WELL...
guffaw guffaw
YOU SEE, WE WERE VISITED BY A BURGLAR...
BUT THE BLOCKHEAD RAN AWAY WITHOUT STEALING ANYTHING!!

EVEN THE THIEF WILL REMEMBER TO BE BETTER PREPARED
chuckle
SO WHILE THE CASE IS STRANGE AND INEXPLICABLE, THERE WERE NO DAMAGES
...COMING ALL THIS WAY FOR A FALSE REPORT.
I'M SORRY YOU WERE FORCED TO WASTE YOUR DAY.
giggle
OH, IT'S NOTHING.
sparkle
STILL, THANK YOU SO MUCH! WE APOLOGIZE PROFUSELY!
SHALL WE TAKE OUR LEAVE?
...WELL, SINCE WE CAN BE OF NO HELP HERE...
HII-SAMA?
sfard
Ah!
Ahh...
sigh

Note: 'Suzume iro' is an orangeish brown color

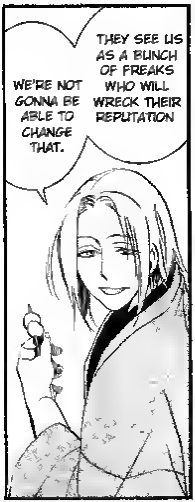
WELL, GUESS FIRES AND THIEVES AND THAT SORT OF THING AREN'T SO BAD, BUT OUR LINE OF BUSINESS...
chew chew
WELL, IT'S TO BE EXPECTED THEIR VARIETY SHOP IS A MAJOR RUSINESS

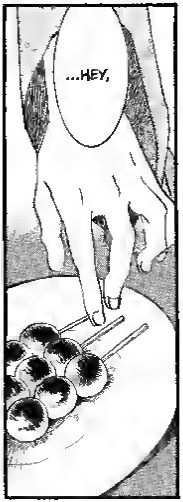

IF SOMETHING DID HAPPEN, WHAT SHOULD WE DO?
DO WE EVEN KNOW WHAT THE RUMOR WAS...?


YEAH.
THEY WERE HIDING SOMETHING BACK THERE, WEREN'T THEY?

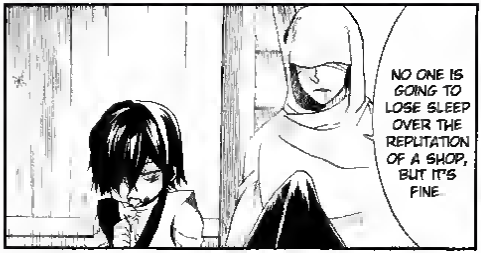
OUT OF SIGHT, OUT OF MIND,
right?

ARE WE JUST SUPPOSED TO CLOSE OUR EYES AND DO NOTHING?


WE'RE NOT GONNA BE ABLE TO CHANGE THAT.
THEY SEE US AS A BUNCH OF FREAKS WHO WILL WRECK THEIR REPUTATION


...HEY,

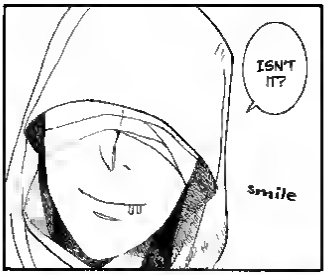
...I GUESS SO.
SUZUME
YOU SHOULD WATCH YOUR TONGUE.
chew
laugh
Serves them right
laugh
I CAN'T BELIEVE THEY WERE THAT FREAKED OUT, THOUGH!
HAHA, I GOT A GOOD LAUGH!
BAD CHIL-DREN...
GET THEIR MOUTHS SEWN UP WITH THREAD, YOU KNOW?
...HII-SAMA, WHEN YOU'RE SCOLDING ME, COULD YOU PLEASE WEAR A MORE APPROPRIATE EXPRESSION...?
he really is a brat
Oho ho ho
First of all, I shouldn't have to scold you!
ork!
Oho ho
pfft~

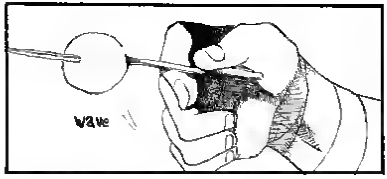

NO ONE IS GOING TO LOSE SLEEP OVER THE REPUTATION OF A SHOP, BUT IT'S FINE.

...
nod
WELL, IF THERE'S NOTHING WE CAN DO, THAT'S THAT.

.....
chew
chew

...
nod


ISN'T IT?
smile


wave

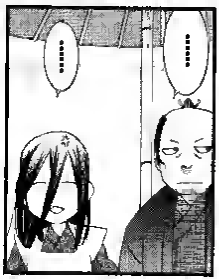
drool

hmm
She's not Kuchiha

Huh?
Okay!
IT HAD TO HAPPEN SOONER OR LATER!
poke
ARE YOU TRYING TO HIDE YOUR FEELINGS FOR ME?
?
OHO
HO
HO

OHO HO-
!?
Is someone else okay ?

You keep a lid on it too.
You're hopeless.
Ow!
thump


.....
.....

!

step

tearful

!

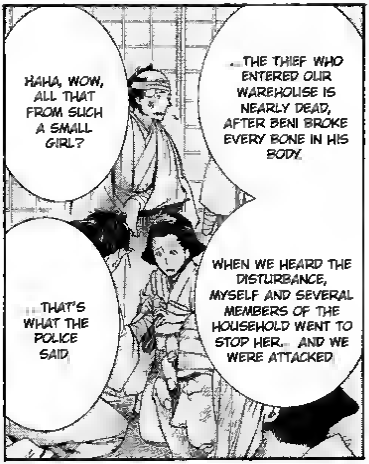
!
stand
..YOU'RE THE EXORCISTS, RIGHT?
!
stand
AND IF WE ARE?
DON'T GO!!
PLEASE!
fall

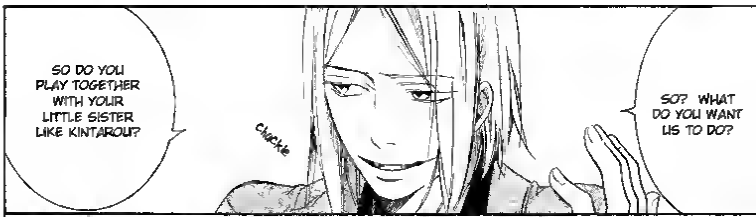
Please save my sister!
...AND ON THAT NIGHT, SOMEHOW THE DOOR WAS UNLOCKED...
...SORRY
AHEZU
OOOOH HOW FASCI-NATING~ ♡
ON-OK
WE STORE GINSENG AND MUMMY POWDER AND OTHER HIGH-PRICED FOREIGN MEDICINAL GOODS IN THERE...
SOMEONE SNUCK INTO OUR STORE-HOUSE.
THE OTHER NIGHT...

Note Yup, that's mummy powder from real mummies In Europe and the Middle East, it was believed that ground up mummy dust could be taken internally for stomachaches, or mixed with bitumen and put on bruises

THAT SOUNDS CARE-LESS
...BUT I DIDN'T FORGET...
MY SISTER IS INSIDE
THIS IS...
MY SISTER, BENI-CHAN.
ドドドン
SFX: SHOCK

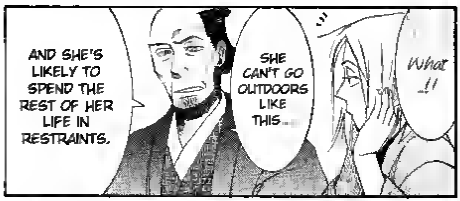
MAN, YOU GUYS HAVE SOME WEEEIRD KINKS.
!
IT'S NOT LIKE WE WANTED TO DO THIS TO HER!
grit
SHE GREW VIOLENT...
TOWARDS PEOPLE, TOWARDS OBJECTS... EVEN TOWARDS HERSELF.
OH DEAR.


...THE THIEF WHO ENTERED OUR WAREHOUSE IS NEARLY DEAD, AFTER BENI BROKE EVERY BONE IN HIS BODY.
HAHA, WOW, ALL THAT FROM SUCH A SMALL GIRL?
WHEN WE HEARD THE DISTURBANCE, MYSELF AND SEVERAL MEMBERS OF THE HOUSEHOLD WENT TO STOP HER... AND WE WERE ATTACKED.
...THAT'S WHAT THE POLICE SAID.



Note: Kintarou is a popular hero from folk tales. I'm not really sure what particular legend Suzume is referencing, but since Kintarou's mother was a mountain witch, I assume his sister would be monstrous

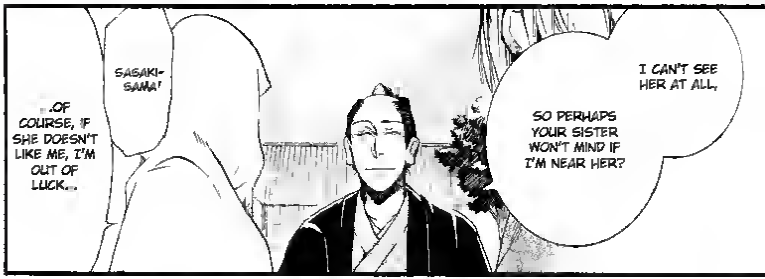
THERE'S NO WAY TO REMOVE IT WITHOUT TEARING HER SKIN IT'S A DEMON MASK!
ONCE IT POS-SESSED HER, IT WOULDN'T COME OFF.
WHEN WE TRY TO REMOVE IT, SHE SCREAMS IN TERRIBLE PAIN

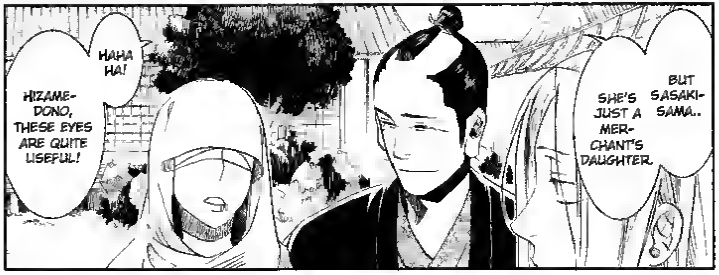


Note: There is a Japanese legend that a cruel mother-in-law put on a monster mask to frighten her daughter-in-law, and when she tried to remove the mask, it was stuck to her face forever.

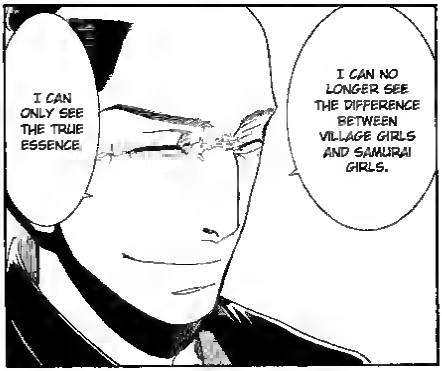
BUT.. BUT MY SISTER..
WAS ALWAYS DREAMING OF THE SAY SHE COULD WEAR OUR MOTHER'S WEDDING KIMONO..!!
WHICH IS MORE IMPORTANT? A LIVING SOUL, OR A MEMENTO OF ONE WHO HAS PASSED?
.....

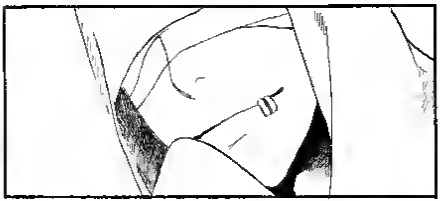
..WELL THEN, SHALL I MARRY THAT GIRL?
OH!

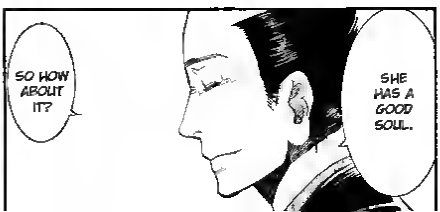

I CAN'T SEE HER AT ALL,
SO PERHAPS YOUR SISTER WON'T MIND IF I'M NEAR HER?
SASAKI-SAMA!
..OF COURSE, IF SHE DOESN'T LIKE ME, I'M OUT OF LUCK...


HAHA HA!
HIZAME-DONO, THESE EYES ARE QUITE USEFUL!
BUT SASAKI-SAMA..
SHE'S JUST A MER-CHANT'S DAUGHTER.

WILL YOU UNFASTEN YOUR BELOVED SISTER'S BONDS...
AND LET US TAKE A NICE LEISURELY SIESTA IN THIS HOT LITTLE ROOM!!


I CAN NO LONGER SEE THE DIFFERENCE BETWEEN VILLAGE GIRLS AND SAMURAI GIRLS.
I CAN ONLY SEE THE TRUE ESSENCE.



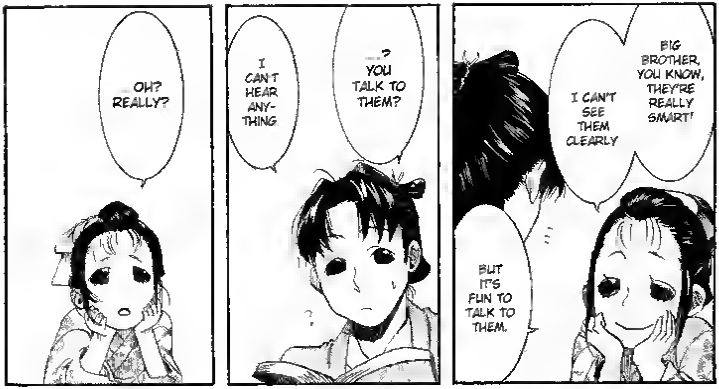

SHE HAS A GOOD SOUL..
SO HOW ABOUT IT?

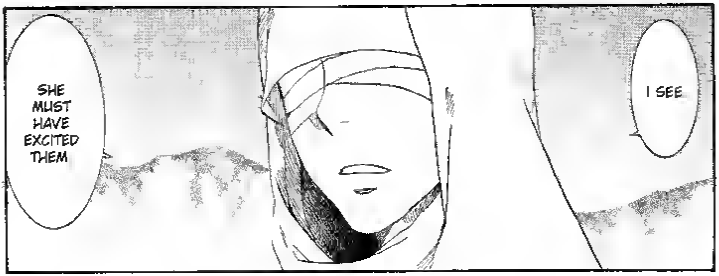
pour
WELL, THEN
WE SHALL REMOVE THE MASK . NO, WE SHALL DESTROY IT
PLEASE KEEP IN MIND THAT THIS NATURALLY MAY CAUSE SOME DAMAGE TO THE LIVING FLESH BENEATH...

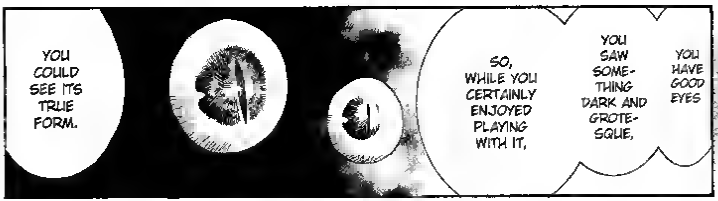
SUPPRESS!
NOW!
BUT I WONDER WHAT THAT GIRL WAS DOING WITH THAT MASK IN THE STORE HOUSE IN THE MIDDLE OF THE NIGHT.
Hoo wi i
WH...
WHAT?!
MASK IS STRUGGLING AGAINST BEING KILLED
Hoo wi
IT WAS MY FAULT.
Hoo wi
"Give energy to my spirit"
"With these countless gifts of purification
And protect him.
Hoo o o o wi

Note: This is a really loose translation taken from the book "Shinto Norito: A Book of Prayers" by Ann Llewellyn Evans. Norito are Shinto blessings used for ritual purification and exorcism. This particular norito is called "Ten Great Treasures from the Gods." You'll sometimes hear the numbers 1-10 recited followed by this line, as kind of a shorthand for the full prayer. It's a typical onmyouji incantation.

EVER SINCE I WAS LITTLE I'VE BEEN ABLE TO SEE SOMETHING LIKE A BLACK FOG...
AND STRANGE, GROTESQUE THINGS IN IT
SINCE NO ONE ELSE COULD SEE THEM, I LIKED THEM.
THEY WERE MY PLAY-MATES
THEY LIKE DARK PLACES,
SO NATURALLY, THEY MULTIPLIED IN THE STORE-HOUSE.
MY SISTER FOUND OUT ABOUT THEM
BECAUSE I TOLD HER
AND FROM THEN ON,
IT'S NOT LIKE THEY'RE PHENOMENA OR ANY-THING...
SHE STARTED GOING INTO THE WARE-HOUSE TO PLAY WITH THEM BY HERSELF


...OH? REALLY?
I CAN'T HEAR ANY-THING
...? YOU TALK TO THEM?
BIG BROTHER, YOU KNOW, THEY'RE REALLY SMART!
I CAN'T SEE THEM CLEARLY
BUT IT'S FUN TO TALK TO THEM.


SHE MUST HAVE EXCITED THEM
I SEE


YOU COULD SEE ITS TRUE FORM.
SO, WHILE YOU CERTAINLY ENJOYED PLAYING WITH IT,
YOU SAW SOME-THING DARK AND GROTE-SQUE,
YOU HAVE GOOD EYES

SHE COULD NOT SEE ITS FEAR-SOME FORM, SO SHE CONFIDED IN IT DEEPLY.
BUT YOUR SISTER HAS SHARP EARS.

HAHA!
WHO'S THERE?
BRO-THER ?
AND SO...
Creak
shock
!?
THEY LEFT THE DOOR WIDE OPEN!
I CAN'T BELIEVE THIS SHOP COULD BE SO CARE-LESS!
?
surprise
WELL, I AIN'T COMPLAIN-ING! THIS WILL BE EASY!
.....
THIEVES?!
HOW'S ABOUT EVERYTHING?
WHAT SHOULD WE TAKE?

IF THEY FIND ME ...
Gasp
SURPRISE
Come here!
Whisper
Come here!
Whisper
I'm here.
OH!
THANK YOU ... PLEASE, WON'T YOU COME OUT!?
REALLY!?
Whisper
Come here
OH, ARE YOU HIDING?
Whisper
That's not true
Whisper
That's not true
Whisper
OH! IS THAT YOU ...?
Whisper
Come
Come
I will help you.
Whisper
Come here.
Come here
Whisper

whisper
look inside
whisper
that box
whisper
whisper
i'll protect you
whisper
the box
whisper
i will fiercely
whisper
protect
whisper
what's important
whisper
i'll protect
whisper
i'll protect you
whisper
it's alright,
Ben
open it
use it
whisper
whisper
quickly
whisper
quickly
THIS?
whisper
open
whisper
A MASK?
use it?
whisper
whisper
put it on
BUT
BUT WHAT IS THIS ...?
quickly
whisper

we will pro-tect ...
our friends!
THUMP
THUMP
HAY!
THUMP
I SAW A LIGHT OVER THERE!
HUH?
THUMP
Ben!
quickly!
THUMP

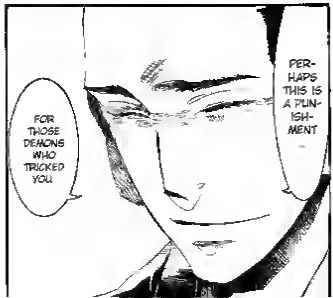
HUH...?
...!
WHAT THE ...!?
HEY!!
IS THAT A KID ...!?
CLATTER
HUH?!
AH!
GAH!?
CLATTER
AH!
CLATTER
GAH!!
SPLASH
HUMANS CANNOT UNDERSTAND THE TRUE MOTIVATIONS OF DEMONS
...
AND YOUR SISTER...

HA HA
...WAS FOOLED INTO THINK-ING THEY WOULD PROTECT HER.
H
HA
AND YOU, TOO, WERE FOOLED
INTO THINKING IT WAS JUST A GAME.
!
!
GULP
Hoooo!
Ho
IT'S ALL ...
Oooo!
MY ...
FAULT ...!!

I'VE ALWAYS WANTED EYES THAT CAN SEE THE PARANORMAL, AND YOU'D JUST DESTROY YOURS LIKE THAT?
!?
...?
SQUEEEEEZE
BECAUSE I HAVE THESE EYES..!!
OH NO, THAT IS NO GOOD.

YOU MUST THINK THIS IS PUNISHMENT FOR PLAYING WITH THOSE DEMONS.
HOWEVER
THAT'S NOT IT AT ALL

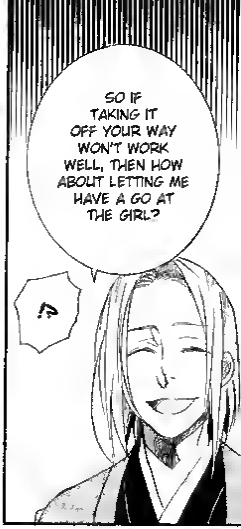
YOUR EYES ARE A RARE GIFT
I'M DEEPLY JEALOUS
JEALOUS OF YOU WHO WAS BORN WITH THOSE EYES WITHOUT HAVING TO SUFFER FOR THEM


PERHAPS THIS IS A PUNISHMENT
FOR THOSE DEMONS WHO TRICKED YOU

IF YOU'RE WILLING TO MARRY THAT GIRL,
THEN WOULDN'T IT ALSO BE POSSIBLE FOR HER TO BECOME ONE OF YOUR SUBORDINATES?
OH?
SA-SAKI-SAMA.

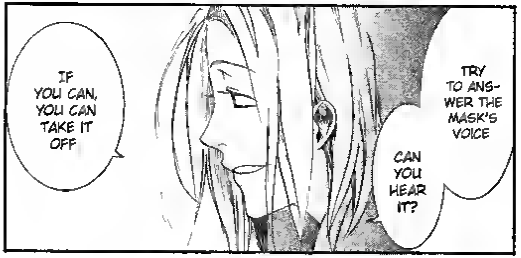
IT'S A MASK.
?
Ooh, that's a good idea!
IF HER EARS ARE THAT GOOD
THEN SHE COULD USE THE MASK FREELY WITHOUT TEARING OFF HER FACE

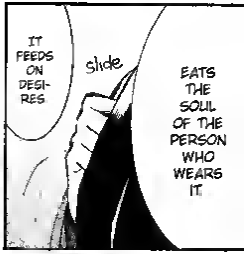
BUT,
IF YOU KEEP IT WELL FED, THEN IT'S POSSIBLE TO KEEP ONE LIKE ME.


SO IF TAKING IT OFF YOUR WAY WON'T WORK WELL, THEN HOW ABOUT LETTING ME HAVE A GO AT THE GIRL?
!?

HEY, GIRL.
FEED IT . . . !?

THAT KIND OF MASK
WHAT !?


IF YOU CAN, YOU CAN TAKE IT OFF
TRY TO ANSWER THE MASK'S VOICE
CAN YOU HEAR IT?

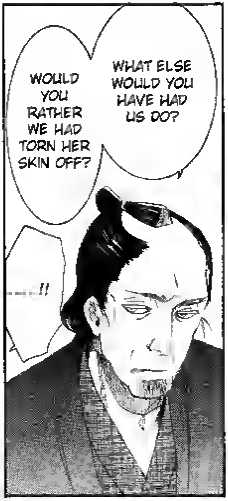

IT FEEDS ON DESIRES
slide
EATS THE SOUL OF THE PERSON WHO WEARS IT

IT'S LIKELY THAT THE MASK WILL JUST ENSNARE HER AGAIN SOME OTHER WAY
W...
WAIT!
WHAT DO YOU MEAN BY "KEEP IT"!?

I had no idea~
LATER
Ah
FLUTTER
BROTHER!!
!!
Onii-chan!!
..
YOU, GIRL

WHAT DID THE MASK SAY?
I MUST FEED IT THE SOULS OF OTHERS EVERY SEASON
IF I DON'T, IT WILL EAT MY SOUL
HEY, IT JUST SAID "THE SOULS OF OTHERS", RIGHT?
WHAT!?
THEY DON'T HAVE TO BE HUMAN
NOW, ANIMAL AND INSECT SOULS PROBABLY WON'T BE ENOUGH TO SATISFY IT...
BUT DEMON'S SOULS...

YOU'RE A GOOD BROTHER WHO CARES FOR HIS SISTER
DEMONS AND HUMANS HAVE NOTHING AT ALL IN COMMON
THEY ARE OUR ENEMIES.


WHAT ELSE WOULD YOU HAVE HAD US DO?
WOULD YOU RATHER WE HAD TORN HER SKIN OFF?
.....!!

BUT THE HUNGRIER THAT MASK IS, THE STRONGER IT WILL BE
SO DON'T WORRY
THAT'S CRAZY!! WHY WOULD YOU DO THIS TO MY SISTER !!?

THEN YOU SHOULD JOIN US.
OR YOU MIGHT FALL DOWN THE DEMON PATH!
WAHAHA

THEY ARE LIKE FIRE
OR SWORD
HOWEVER, AS LONG AS ONE REMEMBERS HOW TO TREAT THEM, THEY ARE NOTHING TO BE AFRAID OF

BUT IF YOU'RE WORRIED,
AS LONG AS THEY WORK FOR US
AND WE ARE THE MASTERS, IT'S OKAY.

AMATSUKI 9 END

nana-mi

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